Shaping the Skin: Conveying Identities Through Skincare and Cosmetics

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ABSTRACT

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Due to the skin's external location, it has been endowed various social meanings. Depending on the condition and adornment of one's skin, social messages are accorded. A smooth, clear complexion communicates good physical and mental health, as internal wellness is perceived as discernible through the skin. When internal wellness is not always possible, or fails to affect the skin, skincare and cosmetics are imagined to offer a user democratic control over not only their skins, but the messages their skins transmit as well. Furthermore, gaining control over one's skin, and therefore identity, is imagined to empower a user, and foster better internal wellness. As these epidermal aides became legitimized and disassociated with abhorrent behaviours in the 20th century, it assumed a critical role in a woman's expression of a healthy adherence to her feminine identity. Once cosmetics in particular became synonymous with women's appearances, it became held as evidence of women's oppression. While this is true, this is only half the story of cosmetics. The troubling reality is that cosmetics are both oppressive and empowering. However, an added dimension of oppression exists among cosmetic users who have a darker complexion, as supposedly democratic beauty aides are predominantly created for those with light complexions.

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Introduction

The function of the skin, in a biological sense, is to perceive one's surroundings. "[It] is the interface through which we touch one another and sense much of our environment" (Jablonski 2006:XV). Socially, the skin is accorded a more public role as it is "the body's largest organ, and it is certainly the most visible" (Jablonski 2006:2). In comparison to the other organs, all located internally, only the skin is "continually being renewed" (Jablonski 2006:2). Thus its exposed and changeable nature is likely why "people in all known cultures modify their skin in some way, often using deliberate marking and manipulation to convey highly personal information about themselves to others" (Jablonski 2006:2).

In contemporary Western society skincare and cosmetics are a prominent method through which the skin is modified. These modifiers seek to smooth and clear the complexion, adhering to aspirational ideas about how the skin *should* look, or how the skin is collectively desired to look. However, attaining "good skin," by whichever means, is perceived as indicative of a sound body and mind. Experts claiming knowledge of the skin, commonly hold a shared belief that the inner and outer workings of the body are interconnected. Emotional turmoil, poor diet, and insufficient hours of sleep are all expected to manifest on the skin, resulting in a compromised complexion. Thus, the skin is regarded as capable of betraying not only one's lifestyle choices or conditions, but also hints of one's character. Therefore, the semi-permanent and temporary skin alterations provided by skincare and cosmetics do more than simply enhance one's complexion. They are attributed for concealing undesirable divulgences, and furthermore, these epidermal corrections communicate to the world that the user is someone who obeys modern virtues. In

short, by improving one's complexion one's image is improved as well, impacting how one is regarded by others as well as themselves.

Throughout the Victorian era, to paint one's face symbolized female sexuality and a lack of morality, qualities respectable women were not encouraged to possess. As a response to this cosmetic censure, women seeking emancipation applied cosmetics as a way to challenge former ideas of femininity. Through a painted face, these women sought to communicate their desires of gaining control over their sexualities and forging a space for themselves in the public sphere. Over time, women's use of cosmetics became accepted and expected of women's appearances. Mirroring the feminist response in the Victorian era, women criticized the practice as oppressive and evidence of patriarchal policing of women's bodies. Thus begs the question: to paint or not to paint? The expectation for either has been considered equally oppressive of women's bodies and wills.

In summation, the uses of skincare and cosmetics are not straightforward. They share complex histories, both modern and antiquated praises and criticisms. Notably, cosmetics are the more scrutinized of the two practices, as skincare's medicinal benefits has lent it a degree of protection from reproach. Given the polarizing takes on skin enhancers, good or bad, empowering or oppressive, superficial or profound, omitting either side of the argument would not produce an accurate account of how these products are collectively understood.

Knowing Through the Skin: Perceiving and Being Perceived

Human skin is a fascinating topic of inquiry, and one that houses a curious double function. On the one hand, the skin governs the body's sense of touch. It is through the skin that

one touches others and perceives a great deal of his or hers environment. On the other hand, the skin's external location causes it to be imbedded with copious social meanings. In Nina Jablonski's *Skin: A Natural History,* the skin's malleable characteristic is offered as at least part of the reason the skin has been endowed its social role. She claims that "because of our unique human ability to deliberately alter its appearance, our skin proclaims our identity and individuality as we wish them to be known" (Jablonski 2006:141). Anthony Synnott's *The Body Social: Symbolism, Self and Society,* reinforces this statement by emphasizing that in addition to a functional purpose, the skin also possesses an equally important social role. "Skin may be painted, tattooed and scarred, tanned and bleached, bathed, shaved, perfumed and anointed, and dirtied, to convey an almost infinite number of messages and a host of meanings" (Synnott 1993:157).

Synnott identifies the face as "unique, physical, malleable and public, [and] the prime symbol is the self" (Synnott 1993:73). He argues that "it is in the face that we recognize each other, and identify ourselves," and "more than any other part of the body, we identify the face as *me* or *you"* (Synnott 1993:73). Synnott goes on to list the kinds of details the face may declare. "[…] the face indicates the age, gender and race of the self with varying degrees of accuracy; also, our health and socioeconomic status, our moods and emotions, even perhaps our character and personality" (Synnott 1993:73). However, what Synnott did not specify, and what is worth emphasizing, is that it is largely through the skin on one's face that these details are gleaned. Thus, it is facial skin that is perhaps most on display, most aligned with the self, and therefore most scrutinized.

Facial skin, more so than any other area of skin on the body, presents an opportunity for the individual to non-verbally communicate their identity and values. Whether the individual

wishes these personal details to be known, or is even in accordance with them, is sometimes beyond their control. Therefore, examining skin alterations can bring to light both desirable and undesirable types of skins, and the associated identities some may seek to promote or undo.

Jablonski maintains that the non-verbal communicative ability of the skin is not unique to the present. "For millennia, skin has served as a statement affirming an affinity to a group or a belief, as a shorthand message of how we view the world and how we wish to be viewed, even after death" (Jablonski 2006:141). However, she claims that the increasing importance placed on the visual evaluation of skin and its alterations today is somewhat unique. Jablonski identifies the people of today as not only visually orientated, but visually obsessed. She argues that "appearance has come to assume an overwhelming primacy" (Jablonski 2006:142). She goes further to argue that "first impressions, and subsequent interactions, are primarily discerned through the skin and its adornment" (Jablonski 2006:142). Therefore, not only is the skin a tool through which humans perceive their tactile surroundings, but, facial skin in particular, is also a means through which they come to be perceived by others, and even sometimes perceive themselves.

What is "Good Skin" and How is It Determined?

Given the communicative ability of the skin, it is not surprising that many invest a great deal of time and money into altering and adorning their skins. After all, there is a great deal at stake. However, before delving into the specifics of what exactly one's skin communicates, sometimes even without the authorization of the individual, it is worth exploring what is desired

from the alterations and skin adornments being made. What kind of skin is being striven for? And what kind of skin is not?

In the contemporary Western world, the diagnosis between "good" and "bad" skins has primarily hinged on two factors: texture and colour. Smoothness and clarity have become imperative qualities the skin must display in order to be categorized as "good," and therefore admirable. While visually determining the clarity of skin is often achieved without difficulty, touching another's facial skin, in order to determine its smoothness, is generally against social convention in the absence of an intimate relationship or a heartfelt moment. As a result, the sense of touch and sight work together to perceive the skin, so much so that the two senses are difficult to untangle and determine which is responsible for the discernment of texture, and which for colour. In fact, such an attempt would prove pointless. What is much more telling, and much more productive, is to explore the way the two senses join together.

David Howes' and Constance Classen's description of the senses at work in museums describes this merging of vision and touch. They state that "ways of seeing are also ways of not touching" (Howes & Classen 2013:5). Classen's *The Deepest Sense: A Cultural History of Touch,* suggests that the museum's gradual desertion of touch for simulated touch, in which one "touches with the sense of sight" (Classen 2012:138), has groomed and sharpened modern society's visual tactility. This indicates an aptitude for visually determining texture in the absence of touch. This lends itself to the inspection of another person's skin, which is rarely "seen with the fingers" and generally only "touched with the eyes" (Classen 2012:146). It can therefore be said that we have become masters of visually feeling skins. Any kind of compromise to the skin's texture, the bumpiness of acne, enlarged pores, the flakiness of dry skin, the crevasses and folds created by wrinkles, are visually observed and tangibly assumed. Likewise,

redness, hyperpigmentation, or any form of discolouration—often indiscernible through touch alone—are visually imagined as rough or irritated skins. While Jablonski is correct to assert that "[…] the expressive functions of skin and body decoration, […] have expanded the communicative potential of our bodies and reinforced the primacy of the visual sense in our sensory repertoire" (Jablonski 2006:164), body decoration, or more specifically, facial alterations and adornments, have also reinforced the ambiguity of visual tactility.

Although its origins are likely unknown, an aversion towards any kind of rough or uneven epidermis has dominated notions of good skin in various parts of the world, among various peoples. Similarly to the prevalence of hair and fashion standards, facial skin ideals have been, and continue to be, communicated as yet another imperative beauty benchmark to be aspired for. Thus not only is skin the organ through which the sense of touch is housed, but there seems to be a collective longing for it to be touchable as well, or at least look that way.

Why is "Good Skin" Desirable?

Indicative of Health

The communicative nature of the skin becomes clearer once the relationship between one's skin and one's health is explored. Jablonski writes that "for thousands of years before the birth of modern medicine in the eighteenth century, the skin alone testified to the state of a person's health, displaying most of known signs and symptoms of disease" (Jablonski 2006:121). She attributes the development of dermatology, "the catalog of recognized skin conditions" (Jablonski 2006:121), in Western medicine a result of this. Birthmarks were believed to divulge

what had influenced one's mother during her pregnancy, moles were said to foretell an individual's fate.

Indicative of Character and Moral Inclinations

Besides physical health, the skin has been understood as revealing of one's character. David Howes' and Constance Classen's *Ways of Sensing,* explains how the colouring of one's skin was thought to indicate an excess of a particular temperament. A red complexion indicated an excess of blood, a yellow complexion was believed to be symptomatic of a bad temper, a dark hue was associated with irritability, and a fair complexion with a calmness (Howes & Classen 2014:41). According to Steven Connor, the skin's condition was also thought to determine a person's moral inclinations. He indicates that most skin disorders are associated with sin. He draws on the biblical example of lepers equated with immorality and disgrace. He explains that "the temptation is to believe that the ills and the poisons of the mind or the personality have somehow or other erupted straight out of the skin" (Ahmed & Stacey 2001:58). Synnott equates this belief of the skin as something that could be read and understood. In the medieval view, "past, present and future were written on the face, if only it could be divined" (Synnott 1993:81).

The Renaissance period ushered in new ways of thinking about the body, and furthered the imagined link between appearance and inner goodness. It was during this time that the body, former enemy pitted against the virtuous soul, became increasingly viewed as "beautiful, good, personal, and *private* (Synnott: 1993:21). Renaissance humanism positioned the human body as the center of the universe. No longer through God alone, the human body, created in the image of God, became the means through which the universe could be understood. Leonardo da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man*, which illustrates the ideal human proportions, can be used as a prime example of the shifting beliefs of the time. Da Vinci drew on the work of an ancient Roman architect,

Vitruvius, who utilized the proportions of the body as inspiration for the proportions in architecture. Thus, Da Vinci re-popularized the opinion that answers and wisdom could also be gleaned in God's *creations,* namely the human body, rather than in God alone.

By emphasizing the importance of the body, beauty, predominantly that of the face, came to assume "divine and mystical significance" (Synnott 1993:86). Synnott draws on the work of Baldasar Castiglione, who summarizes the dominant argument of the time. He argues that because "beauty springs from God," goodness is therefore found in beauty (Synnott 1993:87). Castiglione argued further that "[…] only rarely does an evil soul dwell in a beautiful body, and so *outward beauty is a true sign of inner goodness*…" (Synnott 1993:87). According to Synnott, the "belief that physical beauty is *caused* by spiritual beauty is characteristic of the Renaissance" (Synnott 1993:87). This was a period that reinvigorated the beauty mystique, a "belief that the beautiful is good, and the ugly is evil; and conversely that the morally good is physically beautiful and the evil is ugly" (Synnott 1993:78). No longer a sinful prison to the soul, the body became increasingly viewed as a mirror of one's soul's condition. Therefore the stakes for beauty increased in importance as well. Synnott argues that in the twentieth century, the notion of one's outer casing as corresponding to one's inner morality and character, are reflected in the face, and continue to persist (Synnott 1993:92). I argue that this can be stretched to the twenty-first century as well.

Attractive Prospects

Perhaps on a more superficial level, but nonetheless significant, the skin also plays a role in how attractive a person may be considered. According to Synnott "the face is also the principle determinant in the perception of our individual beauty or ugliness, and that these perceptions imply for self-esteem and life chances" (Synnott 1993:73). While it is true that

several different factors are taken into account, and vary culturally, I argue that the perceived condition of one's skin is a critical aspect in the determination of an attractive face. In a contemporary Western society, to be considered attractive, is to be treated favourably. Synnott explains that "attractive children are more popular in school and achieve higher grades; parents and teachers have higher expectations of attractive people, and more positive evaluations of their personalities" (Synnott 1993:74). He goes on to claim that an "aesthetic discrimination" (Synnott 1993:75) can impact one's position in the social hierarchies of society. "Attractiveness is the *prime* predictor of romantic attachment for dating and attractiveness opens doors for jobs, for higher salaries in jobs and for higher evaluations of work done" (Synnott 1993:74). Furthermore, what he labels as "beautyism" and "facism" are prejudice and discriminatory in that the "beautiful and attractive (however defined)" enjoy better treatment, while the "ugly and less attractive are virtually institutionalized in our society, and they are the last major bastion of inequality" (Synnott 1993:100).

On speaking about the benefits of good skin, one of my informants, Barbara, described good skin as "skin that isn't noticeable to a person that doesn't notice skin. [Looking at] good skin, someone who isn't in the know would just see nothing. There's no pimples, there's no pores, it's just a flat surface with nothing going on." While she excluded herself from the vast majority of people, due to her heightened awareness of her own skin, and therefore that of others, she identified herself as someone who would notice good skin for what it was: something to be admired and desired. However, according to Barbara's account, most people would internalize good skin as a neutral or something innocuous. Bad skin, conversely, "would be something to notice, someone might say "oh look at her acne, or look at her dry patches." Bad skin [leaves the observer with] something to pick at, whereas with good skin there is nothing to pick at. Good

skin is something unnoticeable." Therefore, when an observer is able to tangibly, or visually-haptically pick *at* a flaw, or visually pick *up on* a flaw, the condition of one's skin becomes internalized as bad or compromised in some way. To have clear, smooth, taught skin, is to be clear of any criticisms or unwanted attention. In summation, a desire to be considered attractive in the form of good skin, can be understood as not only a desire for favourable opportunities, but also a desire to recess from critical eyes and attain an invisibility or at least a neutrality.

Putting the Sin in Skin: A Historical Account of Skin Aides

Jablonski is correct to indicate the malleability, and therefore the expressive potentials of the skin. However, the skin is often finicky and uncooperative. It is likely this struggle, the incapability of altering the epidermis to certain specifications, that gave rise to the invention of cosmetics and skincare. Both these skin-smoothing assistants have long and somewhat sporadic histories, moving from vain and corrupt to encouraged and even necessary.

In her book *Face Paint*, Lisa Eldridge, a celebrity makeup artist who uses her Youtube channel to teach the public application techniques and touches on Western histories of cosmetics, states that early Christian writers were among the first to liken cosmetics to immorality, proclaiming it sinful for the very first time. According to a new moral code, born after the Christian conversion of the Roman Empire in 325 CE, the use of makeup "suggested that God's creation wasn't quite good enough in its original state, and that female vanity wished to improve

upon it" (Eldridge 2015:49). In his writings, *Clement of Alexandria Paedagogus,* Clement of Alexandria or Titus Flavius Clemens, a Christian theologian who taught at the Catechetical School of Alexandria, featured a new argument. Drawing on Christian principles, the theologian swiftly and efficiently rebuked both Egyptian religion and fashion in one swift blow. Comparing women who painted to Egyptian temples, he pronounced both to be deceitfully seductive and ultimately vacant.

> "But if one withdraw the veil of the temple, I mean the head-dress, the dye, the clothes, the gold, the paint, the cosmetics,—that is, the web consisting of them, the veil, with the view of finding within the true beauty, he will be disgusted, I know well. […] For the deity that is sought, to whom you have rushed, will not be found within, but a cat, or a crocodile, or a serpent of the country, or some such beast unworthy of the temple, but quite worthy of a den, a hole, or the dirt. The god of the Egyptians appears a beast rolling on a purple couch. For he will not find the image of God dwelling within, as is meet; but instead of it a fornicator and adulteress has occupied the shrine of the soul. And the true beast will thus be detected—an ape smeared with white paint" (Clement of Alexandria n.d.:436).

In addition to his account of the hollow and vain practice of body embellishment, Clement of Alexandria argued that "cosmetics and dyes indicate that the soul is deeply diseased" (Clement of Alexandria n.d.:438). By invoking Christian thought, Clement of Alexandria argued that unlike animals who "rejoice in ornament that is their own," women who adorn themselves pay no regard to God's creation, and therefore must "think [themselves] so unlovely as to need foreign, and bought, and painted beauty" (Clement of Alexandria n.d.:439). Furthermore, he reasoned that since Moses commanded against creating an image of God through art, then women were in violation of this second commandment "who by their own reflection produce an

imitation of their own likeness, in order to the falsifying of their faces" (Clement of Alexandria n.d.:439). The theologian urges his readers to adhere to the Word which advises that one focus on the condition of the soul, rather than the ornamentation of the body.

Not did Clement of Alexandria consider women who concerned themselves with their earthly bodies to be defacing God's creation, but he also argued they were thought to be at risk of becoming the type of woman who "care[s] little for keeping at home with their husbands; but loosing their husbands' purse-strings, they spend its supplies on their lusts, that they may have many witnesses of their seemingly fair appearance; and, devoting the whole day to their toilet, they spend their time with their bought slaves" (Clement of Alexandria n.d.:436). In short, Clement of Alexandria warned against artificially enhancing the body because he imagined it the catalyst to three deplorable types of women: the harlot, the irreligious sinner, and the uncommitted housewife. The connections created between sin and paint held strong in the Western popular imagination throughout most of the Medieval Period.

Even after the shift from a restrained usage to a very liberal application by both genders during the Renaissance Period in Western Europe, the Christian derived association between paint and unholy deception could not be entirely evaded. As evidence, Eldridge points to Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* where Hamlet berates Ophelia saying "I have heard of your paintings too, well enough; God has given you one face, and you make yourself another" (Eldridge 2015:30). Critic and scholar, George Brandes' remarked regarding Shakespeare's hatred of rouge, in which he claimed this a "hatred somewhat disproportionate to the triviality of the matter," seems to indicate the coexistence of both paint and religious censure during this time (Eldridge 2015:30).

By the nineteenth century, the American Revolution (1765-1783), the French Revolution (1789–1799) and the Napoleonic Wars (1803–1815) all influenced the rejection of paint by both

men and women. This cosmetic rebuff solidified discernment between skin-improving and skin-masking preparations (Peiss 1998:10). *Cosmetics* often referred to creams, lotions, soaps and other substances that would fall under the umbrella of *skincare* today. Increasingly accepted, these homemade products were understood as working in conjunction with nature by "impart[ing] a whiteness, freshness, suppleness, and brilliancy to the skin" (Peiss 1998:10). Many women were familiar with such beautifying preparations, both written and oral, as they had been passed down through generations. Peiss indicates that these inherited recipes largely descended from women during the 1600s and 1700s who knew "cosmetical physic," from their knowledge of cooking, gardening, and caring for the sick (Peiss 1998:12). The produced cosmetics were a blend of "the arts of beautifying and the science of bodily care" (Peiss 1998:12). Possibly because results are varied from person to person, generally gradual, if occurring at all, skin care has always been more closely aligned with apothecaries and natural remedies.

Established as an adversary to skin care, paints included tinted liquids, creams, kohl pencils, powders and other such products commonly referred to as *makeup* or *cosmetics* today. These controversial materials were accused of "mask[ing] nature's handiwork" (Peiss 1998:10) and producing an artificial mask that concealed a person's true appearance. They were also widely shunned for temporarily concealing flaws rather than healing the skin. Unlike skincare, the effects of makeup can be dramatic and immediate, with little variation from person to person. Additionally, apprehension towards paints was well founded as mercury, lead, and arsenic often appeared in formulas. "The world of rouge pots and powder boxes was a very threatening one indeed" (Peiss 1998:36). Thus, a painted face became strictly reserved for prostitutes and wicked women who deceitfully masked for the sake of seduction, ensuing social ascension. Synonymous

with deceit, artifice, and low social standing, women who painted lay in stark contrast to feminine virtues of sexual chastity and purity.

Interestingly however, adverse attitudes did not entirely abolish the use of cosmetics, they merely made them more covert. Peiss recounts that after the Civil War (1861-1865) women applying dangerous lead-based whitening lotions began to appear in medical records. The desire for an appealing complexion, which at this time was a fair complexion, trumped social disdain towards complexion enhancers for several women. Peiss indicates that at least part of the reason for secretive beauty preparations was due to a belief in physiognomic principles, where one's appearance corresponded with certain characteristics (Peiss 1998:24). Much like humourism and the beauty mystique, this pseudoscience argued that physical attributes indicated an individual's moral inclinations. Unlike men who were classified into a diverse range of occupations and proficiencies, women were reduced to a mere two categories: beauty and virtue (Peiss 1998:24). Thus a woman's beauty, in which fair skin played a large role, was believed to indicate her goodness. Physiognomy helped to raise women's beauty from an aesthetic ideal to a moral dilemma. It therefore comes as little surprise that many women indulged in beauty aides and were desperate to conceal their usages, even despite the censures of the Victorian Period. Many only admitted to such applications once their illnesses became quite grave.

As the Victorian era came to a close, a number of fashion authorities, inventions, and political changes, encouraged women, and women only, to abandon their clandestine painting, and to once again reclaim the practice. Queen Victoria's successor and son, King Edward VII and his wife Queen Alexandra of Denmark, both encouraged the use of cosmetics, but in different and perhaps unintended ways. Similar to both Catherine de'Medici and Queen Elizabeth I, Queen Alexandra promoted the use of cosmetics by wearing these products herself.

As “one of the first women of the Edwardian era to openly wear powder and rouge, [she made] it permissible for other women” (Eldridge 2015:37). Additionally, her rank as a Queen consort bestowed “[a] royal stamp of approval and a level of acceptability that no one else could” (Eldridge 2015:37). Furthermore, her husband, King Edward VII, reputed as a playboy, was known to have had sexual relations with some of the most famous stage actresses of the time. Among other societal shifts that were already diminishing associations of actresses as “women of low morals,” the king’s relation with these painted women helped to elevate their statuses. During this time actresses became communicated, for the first time, as talented and worthy of emulation.

It is important to note that while both King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra, were hugely influential figures, they cannot, and should not, be credited for single-handedly thrusting paint back into the realm of acceptability. Several inventions can be credited for creating anxieties concerning the appearance before both figures had either began wearing paint, or associating with women who did. According to Peiss, it was only after the arrival of photography in 1839 that attitudes towards appearances, and subsequently cosmetics, began to shift (Peiss 1998:45). Prior to photography, mirrors served as the most common means available for the inspection of one’s appearance. However, mirrors during this time were often uneven, resulting in an obscured reflection. “What most vexed the public was that the photograph revealed the face and body with a degree of detail and precision never before seen. Its realism raised questions about the body and identity: Did photography capture only surface appearances, or did it represent inner self?” (Peiss 1998:46). As photography became increasingly popular, women who had ordinarily rejected paint suddenly requested its assistances in photography studios.

Soon after its inception, photography became an important tool in the commercialization of the human face. Images of actresses, ballet dancers and burlesque stars—increasingly viewed as celebrities—flooded the market. Peiss notes that making these famous faces into "pictures for the public gaze involved the frank use of makeup, common of the theater. Actress' photographs display[ed] smooth and flawless skin, as well as the use of eyeliner and lip pencil" (Peiss 1998:48). The wide dissemination of these photographs generated a new done-up beauty standard women were invited to emulate. Alongside photography, Peiss also credits the expansion of electric lighting as another important invention that cultivated the growing anxiety of one's appearance. Much less forgiving than candlelight, electric lighting was considered "fearfully trying to even the best of skins and warranted rouge" (Peiss 1998:48).

While Peiss credits technological advancements for ushering in a more public and outspoken desire for skin beautifiers, she emphasizes that women entrepreneurs, as well as theatrical cosmetic brands, were the first to meet that demand. Barred from many other occupations, the cosmetics industry presented women with a unique opportunity to financially benefit from an otherwise crippling feminine stereotype. Drawing on their supposed natural penchant for beauty, women assumed an authority on all matters related to beauty and bodily care. Many women resourcefully founded salons, beauty schools, correspondence courses and mail-order companies. "Ironically, the feminine stereotype that rendered women unfit for the world of commerce validated their endeavors in the beauty business" (Peiss 1998:62). Remarkably, Peiss notes that it was mainly working-class, immigrant, or black women who became the most successful in the business of beauty. "Coming from poor, socially marginal backgrounds, they played a surprisingly pivotal role in redefining mainstream ideals of beauty and femininity in the twentieth century" (Peiss 1998:5). Canadian immigrant Elizabeth Arden,

Jewish-Polish immigrant Helena Rubenstein, African-American entrepreneurs Madame C.J. Walker and Annie Turnbo Malone, were among the most successful and influential businesswomen who encouraged women to take care of their appearances, and most importantly, to take pride in the *process* of caring for one's appearance.

According to Peiss, the first women to promote the consumption of cosmetics were confronted by the dilemma of how to endorse products that evoked female immorality and whose use consumers often concealed. A language which addressed customers as "friends" and "sisters," became an effective tool among women entrepreneurs (Peiss 1998:82). By harnessing an environment where women helped women, entrepreneurs pulled beauty practices out from behind locked washroom doors, and into discussions in women's social circles. According to Peiss the most important influences on women's cosmetic practices were other women. "Sometimes friends discouraged each other from appearing 'painted.' Sometimes women talked themselves out of making up simply by imagining the censure of their neighbours: they feared to look ridiculous without knowing it" (Peiss 1998:175). Likewise, women often egged each other on and instigated purchases and application. Peiss notes that "some mail-order firms encouraged women to form purchasing clubs for discounts and premiums. They believed that friends who shared catalogs, discussed products, and wrote up orders together made cosmetics more acceptable to one another" (Peiss 1998:82). As cosmetics companies were not yet rid of criticisms, they began to rely on and encouraged women-to-women advice.

Besides drawing on women's social networks and routines, women entrepreneurs also exposed cosmetic application in the form of public demonstrations. At salons and parlors experts "made hidden beauty practices visible, easing women's embarrassment and ignorance about cosmetics use" (Peiss 1998:85). It was in these places women could be taught by beauty

culturists both correct systems of cleansing and cosmetic application. Makeup became presented as something that should mimic and enhance nature's handiwork, and should never be applied in a manner that masked one's true appearance. Thus the alignment between cosmetics and artifice began to give way, placing cosmetics well on the road towards normalization and acceptance. As a result, a shift in language became apparent. No longer referred to as paint, the term *makeup* "indicated that face coloring too could be considered an essential finishing touch in women's daily beauty ritual" (Peiss 1998:86). By demystifying complexion enhancers, women entrepreneurs helped to bind ideas of femininity to making up, a prevailing association that continues to thrive today.

Peiss outlines the contributions of businesswomen in the legitimization of beauty products in order to illustrate the complex web of women's entrepreneurial achievements and oppressive female stereotypes. While the link between women and decoration had previously confined them to the private realm, by successfully harnessing an advantageous edge, women used their beauty authority to enter and solidify a place for themselves in the public, economic realm. Peiss reminds her readers that critics condemning the practice as a leading cause for women's oppression, often neglect the complex origins of the business of beauty. Furthermore, to neglect that the beauty business built for women was built *by* women, and opened job opportunities to them never before present, is to grasp only a partial view of the story of cosmetics and skincare (Peiss 1998:4).

Why Women?

As mentioned, the Renaissance period ushered in fashionable uses of paint, even despite Christian rebuff. Among those who could afford pigment for body adornment, namely the aristocratic classes, the use of paint was becoming quite prevalent. In fact, rouge overload continued after the Renaissance and well into the mid-eighteenth century, where aristocratic children and men had begun to apply rouge and whitening powders as well. This trend eventually gave rise to the macaroni fashion, a term given to men who “exceeded the ordinary bounds of fashion" (Rauser 2004:101-117). Some considered these men impeccably fashionable and well spoken, while others emphasized a homosexual association, deeming these men effeminate or even epicene. Eventually the macaroni trend transformed into that of the dandies, for whom refined dress and language were also emphasized. Both the macaroni and dandy fashions were worn by the elite and adopted by the growing middle-class, who attempted to imitate an aristocratic lifestyle, constructing a type of social prestige of their own.

The American Revolution (1765-1783), the French Revolution (1789–1799) and the Napoleonic Wars (1803–1815) all had sobering effects on the uses of paint, especially among men. According to Peiss, during the American Revolution, “in a republican society, manly citizens and virtuous women were expected to reject costly beauty preparations and other signs of aristocratic style” (Peiss 1998:23). Also referred to as “the great masculine renunciation” by fashion historians, “spectacular male display, once considered an essential symbol of monarchial rule, [was replaced] with a subdued and understated appearance” (Peiss 1998:23). As those holding authoritative positions in the military became increasingly viewed as national heroes, high-born men began to emulate a more rugged look, one which was increasingly considered the epitome of masculinity. Napoléon Bonaparte can be identified as a pivotal example many would have likely wished to emulate. Born without status, in Ajaccio, a French island off of Croatia, he

climbed the ranks through military prowess and eventually fashioned himself a position as an emperor.

Perhaps taking pause to wonder why only women were encouraged, and eventually swayed, to paint after its resurgence into respectable society is worthy of attention. As indicated, prior to the American Revolution, the French Revolution, and the Napoleonic Wars, affluent men were said to have taken part in the cosmetic practice, so why were they left out of the reemergence of these vexing products? This is a question that has haunted me, and one which I continue to search for answers to. However, I suspect the closest to a response can be found by exploring the constructed differences between the genders. Which characteristics and traits have been assigned to each, and why?

Synnott indicates that opposing polarities were a central theme in Greek philosophy, and subsequently in Christianity as well (Synnott 1993:40,43). Synnott lists "God-Devil, heaven-hell, good-bad, life-death, light-darkness, truth-falsity, freedom-slavery, right-left" (Synnott 1993:43), as a few examples of the dualistic themes imbedded in Christianity. This penchant for opposing pairs is apparent in Anaximander's theory of the "conflict between the four opposite elements, hot and cold, wet and dry, [they were understood as] the driving natural force of the cosmos" (Synnott 1993:40). According to Synnott, Pythagoras, Parmenides and somewhat Aristotle, were responsible for applying a dualistic view to the sexes (Synnott 1993:40). Male and female became established as opposites and understood in opposing relation to one another. In Aristotle's *Economics*, Synnott highlights the confirmation of the genders as polarities. Men were described as strong, whereas women are weak; men courageous, while women cautious; men's role in child rearing as educators, while women's to nurture (Synnott 1993:43).

In Constance Classen's *The Color of Angels,* the explanation of modern Western gender assigned traits is largely derived from the historic gender division of the senses. Drawing on the previously established opposing elements: hot and cold, wet and dry; classical and medieval logic accounted for the differences between men and women's bodies as a difference in temperature. The "superior endowment of heat" (Classen 2012:71) believed to be contained in the male body, was thought to "push the male body upwards, giving men narrow hips and broad shoulders and extending their height" (Classen 2012:71). The heat attributed to men was also understood as having caused the external location of male organs, they were understood as having been pushed outwards by the heat of the masculine body. By contrast, women's bodies were said to be absent of such heat and instead were cold and moist. "A lack of rising heat […] made the female body broad at the bottom and narrow at the top, as well as relatively short in height. With insufficient heat to propel them outwards, the female organs of generation remained ensconced within the body" (Classen 2012:71).

The difference in temperatures between the sexes was also thought to explain a difference in energy levels. The heat of men was assumed to provide them with vitality and an excess of energy to burn, meaning they expended their caloric intake of food. The coldness of women on the other hand, was said to explain their inactiveness by comparison, which indicated their bodies "stored […] food as fat, menstrual blood, and milk, enabling them to carry and nourish children" (Classen 2012:71). In fact, the accumulating and hoarding ability of the cool and moist female body was "held to predispose them to putridity, making them sources of bodily corruption and foul odors" (Classen 2012:72). Menstrual blood was commonly held as a prime example as to why women's bodies were more polluted, and therefore more polluting (Classen 2012:72). From this train of thought, I argue, it is not such a leap to imagine women's bodies as

in greater need of sanitation than men, whose dry heat "gave to male bodies qualities of incorruption and inodor" (Classen 2012:72).

According to Classen, the thermal temperatures were not only understood as the cause for differences between male and female bodies, they were further imagined to influence male and female temperament as well. "[…] the superior heat that made men active and forceful was thought to also make them courageous and forthright. Their relative coldness, by contrast, was said to make women retiring in nature. Rather than attaining their ends through direct means—the assertive method of the hot male—women preferred cold techniques of guile and deceit" (Classen 2012:72). The dry heat of males was also thought to account for their supposed rational thinking and firmness of character. Likewise, the cool wetness of females was said to cause their "muddy thinking and fickle nature[s]" (Classen 2012: 72). As a result, the association of women with moist coolness was twofold. Firstly, the very nature of women's bodies was thought of as evidence of their irrational minds, aligning them with more sensuous dispositions. Secondly, their temperaments—derived from their bodily temperature—"justified the subordinate position of women in society. That the superior should rule over the inferior seemed eminently sensible" (Classen 2012:73).

Regarded as the superior of the two genders, the same logic assigned men with the more rational, distant, nonpolluting of the senses—sight and hearing. Contrarily, "women have traditionally been associated with the senses in Western culture, and in particular, with the "lower" senses. Women are the forbidden taste, the mysterious smell, the dangerous touch" (Classen 1998:1-2). Classen argues that the gender coding of the senses justified two important distinctions between men and women. Firstly, it assigned different social spheres to the two genders. "Men's star-set mastery of the distance senses of sight and hearing empowered them to

travel, to read and write, to conquer and govern" (Classen 1998:6-7). Women's affiliation with the proximity senses assigned them their place in the home, "cooking, sewing, and taking care of families" (Classen 1998:7). Secondly, the gendering of the senses was also thought to indicate that each gender utilized their senses to different ends. "In the case of each sense, men would typically be associated with what were thought to be the nobler qualities of that sense, and women with the more ignoble" (Classen 1998:65). For example, when it came to sight, "men were ideally imagined to employ this sense for intellectual activities such as studying, while women made use of it for the sensual ends of acquiring gaudy clothes and admiring themselves in the mirror" (Classen 1998:66).

In order to maintain their supremacy, in part validated by the gendered associations of the senses, men needed to guard against the usurpation of women. Classen suggests that male visuality—situated at the top of the sensory hierarchy—was highly vulnerable to the sensual power of women (Classen 1998:73). "[…] unless kept in a position of subjection, women with their sensory wiles, had the ability to dethrone men, and male visuality […] (Classen 1998:73). After all, it was through taste that Eve committed the original sin, and coaxed Adam into tasting the forbidden fruit as well (Classen 1998:79). This intrinsic wickedness, or at least greater susceptibility to wickedness, was offered as the primary reason Jakob Sprenger and Heinrich Kramer determined in their *Hammer of Witches,* that most witches tended to be women. The two men determined that "all witchcraft comes from carnal lust" and "since women are feebler both in mind and body, it is not surprising that they should come under the spell of witchcraft" (Synnott 1993:47). Since women were deemed more carnal, and lacking in the strength and discipline men possessed, women therefore shared a vulnerability for consorting with the devil "for the sake of fulfilling their lusts […]" (Synnott 1993:47). To summarize, women who were

thought to have achieved their wicked potentials—which they were more prone due to their alignment with the more corrupting senses—needed to be identified and controlled, in order to avoid the transfer of their pollution to men. Through the abolishment of women who had succumbed to witchcraft, it could be ensured that Eve's role in the expulsion from the Garden of Eden—and therefore the fault of all women—would not recur.

Gendered senses are said to have been abandoned once the rise of the scientific worldview came about in the eighteenth century, as was witch hunting. After this point, "the senses came to be imagined as gender-neutral, objective, data-gathering instruments" (Classen 1998:63). However, despite this, Classen argues that gender and sensory codes have continued to influence modern thought regarding the relations between the sexes and the senses. And perhaps here lies the germ of an idea that supports women as the more decorative and decorated of the genders. Besides their contemptible use of the senses for more trivial matters, such as their sensuous appearances, women were perhaps imagined as concerning themselves with their appearances because their cold, moist bodies required it. In this instance, I point to the gendered temperatures and senses not as the root cause for the construction of women as more ornamented—they were likely assigned this role earlier on—but rather as a significant, yet unassuming, rationale that has perpetuated and solidified this role and expectation for women. In simpler terms, I draw on the perception of women's bodies as more polluted and therefore requiring greater regimes of personal care, and their supposed sensual aptitude for such activities, in order to expose the fabrication of femininity as inherently aligned with the likes of cosmetics and skincare.

"Of Queen's Gardens," a lecture given in 1864 by John Ruskin, the leading English art critic of the Victorian era, echoes a similar opinion about women's supposed dispositions.

Ruskin describes men as the doers, defenders, and creators. His is a perspective that was likely influenced by the industrial revolution, during which ideas of the ideal man had shifted from the blue-blooded aristocrat to the self-made man. Women, according to Ruskin, did not possess an intellect for invention like that of her male counterpart. Rather, a woman's specialty was "for sweet ordering, arrangements, and decision" (Ruskin 1864:n.p.). As might be predicted, these skills found purpose inside the private domain, described by Ruskin in true Victorian form, as "the place of Peace; the shelter, not only from all injury, but from all terror, doubt, and division" (Ruskin 1864:n.p.). However, according to Ruskin, the home was not alone the office of women. The man was imagined as utilizing his manly predispositions, by "securing [his home's] maintenance, progress, and defense" (Ruskin 1864:n.p.). This male aptitude complemented and supported the woman's supposed proficiency in securing her home's "order, comfort, and loveliness" (Ruskin 1864:n.p.). Similarly, Ruskin insisted that the imagined skill sets of both genders served a harmonious role in the public domain as well. While "the man's duty, as a member of a commonwealth, is to assist in the maintenance, in the advance, in the defense of the state," women were assigned the task of "assist[ing] in the ordering, in the comforting, and in the beautiful adornment of the state" (Ruskin 1864:n.p.). Ruskin's argument of women as somehow more skilled in the art of adornment, and therefore their duty in both the home and the state, is one which further secures the association of women with decoration and beauty.

In his book, *Ways of Seeing,* John Berger offers a unique explanation for women's alignment with the upkeep and maintenance of their appearances. Berger supports Classen's identification of vision as a sense that is employed differently by the genders. He argues that "[…] *men act* and *women appear*. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at" (Berger 1972:47). Consequently, Berger explains, a woman's identity becomes fractured into

two elements: the surveyor and the surveyed (Berger 1972:46). Because "men survey women before treating them […], how a woman appears to a man can determine how she will be treated" (Berger 1972:46). According to Berger, it is for this reason a woman's appearance holds much more importance than that of men's, for it directly impacts her wellbeing. Purely because she is a woman, she must therefore analyze her own appearance, as best she can, through the eyes of an objective onlooker. "She has to survey everything she is and everything she does because of how she appears to others, and ultimately how she appears to men, is of crucial importance for what is normally thought of as the success of her life" (Berger 1972:46).

Berger points to European nude paintings as evidence of this unequal employment of vision. He argues that "the painters and spectator-owners were usually men and the persons treated as objects, usually women" (Berger 1972:46). Furthermore, he also indicates that this art-form, and the gender inequalities it perpetuated, has become "so deeply embedded in our culture that it still structures the consciousness of many women. They do to themselves what men to do them. They survey, like men, their femininity" (Berger 1972:46). Although the European nude paintings do not hold the same fame and importance that they once did, the gender inequalities regarding vision continue to be expressed "through other more widely diffused media—advertising, journalism, television" (Berger 1972:63). Therefore, Berger argues, the way women are gazed at, and the ways their images are observed, have not changed since the heyday of European nudes. Berger concludes that women are depicted and viewed differently from men, "not because the feminine is different from the masculine—but because the "ideal" spectator is always assumed to be male and the image of the woman is designed to flatter him" (Berger 1972:64).

If joined with Classen's argument, not only are women's bodies more requiring of maintenance, and are more capable of such maintenance due to societal sensorial delegations, but a woman's upkeep and appearance is more directly tied her well-being. A woman's appearance is more significant than that of her male counterpart, because her gender is more often on display, portrayed in paintings, or being captured in photographs. Hers is an image that is more scrutinized and consumed, and just as she is more carefully watched, she too learns to carefully and continually watch herself.

Women's susceptibility to wickedness, as discussed by Classen, was said to be the result of their affiliation with the lower, more contaminating senses. Likewise, it was early Christian theologians who determined skin enhancements, or any enhancement that improved on God's creations, a sin. Therefore, women can be understood as being entangled in a web of wickedness that they could not be untangled from. They were considered sinfully inclined because of their sensorial employment, and this led them to be requiring of a higher degree of bodily maintenance, which they were supposedly inherently more skilled at, but this "skill" was deemed artificial, and therefore deceitful. In a small exhibit, titled *Standing Tall: The Curious History of Men in Heels,* located on the second floor of the Bata Shoe Museum, in Toronto, Canada, the association between femininity and deceitful ornamentation appears to have also occurred among gendered footwear fashions. A display description reads:

> "Enlightenment arguments promoted the idea that men, even those of the lower classes, were uniquely endowed with rational thought, and that this capacity specifically made them worthy of political enfranchisement. Women, in contrast, were represented as being naturally deficient in reason and unfit for education, citizenship, and control of property. Fashion was redefined as frivolous and feminine and the high heel, a principle artifice of dress, was abandoned by most men" (Bata Shoe Museum, Toronto, Canada).

Thus, the frivolity and deception of adornment were increasingly promoted as inherently part of the feminine realm, primarily because women were accorded these qualities.

Methodology and Field Sites

Research gathering was conducted using five different methods. First, advertisements and ad campaigns promoting skincare and cosmetics were analyzed. Both digital and non-digital ads helped to reveal how these products were expected to affect both the skin and the user's psyche. By focusing on the emotional component these products were said to bestow, an interconnected relationship between the skin and one's inner wellness was discerned. The majority of these advertisements were gathered from *Allure Magazine,* an American women's beauty magazine that particularly focuses on beauty products. The magazine routinely features articles that incorporate the opinions and advice from beauty authorities such as makeup artists, beauty curators, dermatologists, product chemists, and so on. For this reason, *Allure* was selected due its high volume of beauty advertisements. Additionally, I surveyed the ways in which beauty products were described, and subsequently sold, by vendors. I analyzed these virtual product descriptions and suggested methods of use much in the same way I did advertisements. Sephora was especially targeted for information, although not exclusively, because the company offers a staggering number of beauty brands. Put another way, the company acts as somewhat of a supermarket for beauty products, where many different brands are made widely available.

Second, formal and informal interviews with those who purchase, as well as those who sell beauty products, were carried out. Informants who sell beauty products were approached by me for an interview once I had formed a friendly relationship with them by frequenting their

places of work. The bulk of my informants who purchase beauty products, were found as a result of snowballing from my initial informant Barbara, who I already had a relationship with prior to this thesis. These interviews informed my work as to how skincare and cosmetics were actually used and imagined beyond the adverts' instructions, as well as the difficulties several users encountered regarding shade ranges. These interviews shed light on both the oppressive and empowering potentials of skin aides.

My third method of research gathering employed autoethnography. In one instance I attended a Yogi's Guide to Skincare workshop for a small fee. I opted to conduct fieldwork at a Yoga studio because of the exercise's emphasis on overall health and wellness. I hoped the workshop would inform my work of the common perceptions between one's internal health and the condition of one's skin. As I had hoped, diet, stress levels, and skincare were described as the three methods of skin maintenances requiring attention, routine, and balance. Furthermore, I gained entry to several Sephora skincare and cosmetic events through my enrolment in their system. These events provided my work with a deeper understanding of how these products are described, sold, and marketed. My last autoethnographic experience included shopping for a foundation suitable for one of my informants. In this instance I acted as the beauty authority, selecting foundations I thought might work for her. During this experience I encountered shade limitations at the drug store first hand.

My fourth method of research included an online presence, byways of following blogs and Youtube videos which review, document, and discuss cosmetics and skin care items. Similar to the interviews conducted, these helped to further reveal a user's experience with these products.

As my fifth and final method of research, historical accounts of cosmetic and skincare, within the western world, were drawn on. These helped to inform and broaden arguments as to whether skin aides are oppressive or empowering. Furthermore historical accounts of the ways in which cosmetics, skincare, and the skin have been imagined were married to the contemporary accounts I encountered through my informants and social media sites. In this way I employed a method of historical sociology in order to trace cosmetic and skincare usages.

Beauty as a Woman's Right: Cosmetics and Skincare as Democratic Leveling Tools

Political Messages

Jablonski's description of skin decoration as a communicative non-language is discernable among women's first frank uses of cosmetics. "Women were using makeup to mark any number of differences, asserting worldliness against insularity and sexual desire against chastity" (Peiss 1998:55). Through cosmetic enhancements, made-up women demanded attention and a space in public life. They sought control of their identities by ways of molding and shaping their appearances. From this point on they would be known as they wished themselves to be known, and that identity could sometimes change several times within the same day. By the 1930's the constraining *types* of women—the lady and the hussy—had become moods and choices women were increasingly free to shift between (Peiss 1998:3). Furthering the trend started by beauty culturists, mass marketers urged women "to proclaim their liberation from the fetters of the past by using cosmetics" (Peiss 1998:134). Certainly a lucrative business decision, the new mass-market cosmetics industry closely aligned itself with women's modernity and emancipation. Free from the limiting moral codes and fashions of the Victorian era, women

were encouraged to etch the social changes brought about by the women's movement on their faces (Peiss 1998:86).

Democratic Beauty

Once more widely encouraged, the social advancements and egalitarian advantages of cosmetic donning became loudly promoted. Peiss quotes a woman's exclamation that "we can't all be born beautiful" (Peiss 1998:57). As woman's beauty was becoming increasingly integral to their social climbing, cosmetics provided women deemed less attractive with an invaluable leveling tool. In the marriage market an attractive woman with coveted physical attributes was more likely to marry above her own social status, confirming the market value of beauty. As women began to enter the labour market in greater numbers, this phenomenon became true of the workplace as well. Peiss notes that "women who start out to battle with the world alone will be more successful and demand more respect if they are attractive and well dressed" (Peiss 1998:57). Alexander Edmonds notes in his article *'The Poor Have The Right To Be Beautiful,'* that beauty "is an unfair hierarchy, but one which can disturb other unfair hierarchies" (Edmonds 2007:377). Those considered attractive have an instantly higher chance of being hired because women are especially "selected based on their bodies and appearances" (Edmonds 2007:369). One of Edmonds' informants even notes that those whose appearances are considered inadequate will likely have a much harder time finding employment (Edmonds 2007:369). Therefore, by applying cosmetics a woman could not only change her looks, but also her prospects as well. As a result, cosmetics assumed a pivotal role in the new business aesthetic among women. Quick to realize this, advertisers adjusted marketing campaigns accordingly. "As copywriter Edith Lewis explained, successful beauty advertising created 'situations that bring strongly before the

reader's imagination the social disadvantages of a bad complexion, the social incentives for a good one'" (Peiss 1998:142).

Even the act of buying cosmetics and skincare yielded possible social incentives. Purchasing allowed women to at least feel as though they were scaling the social ladder. Faced with what Peiss calls a paradoxical problem, marketers were intent on maintaining an ambiance of exclusivity and luxury yet aspired to promote beauty aides to the masses (Peiss 1998:88). Peiss exhibits the examples of Helena Rubinstein and Elizabeth Arden, who reached profitable solutions by "design[ing] marketing campaigns to reinforce the prestige of their systems, urging women to emulate and vicariously join high society by purchasing costly cosmetics" (Peiss 1998:88). Thus, advertisements guaranteed a purchasable beauty to ordinary women unable to afford the leisure time and money wealthier women could spend. A working woman might work nine to five, but by purchasing cosmetics and skincare her appearance could fool others into believing her a woman of leisure. After all, as Segna R described "it's hard to get up at 6, work till 5 or 6, rush home, eat, and either step out or do some odd jobs around the home, and still have rosy cheeks and sparkling eyes" (Peiss 1998:185). By presenting women with a seemingly purchasable beauty, cosmetics offered women a degree of class fluidity, or at least anonymity.

Democratic Perceptions of Health

If dissected, the skin is imagined to betray one's social status because the skin is thought to reveal the effects of one's lifestyle, and overall internal wellness. This characteristic of the skin, as divulging of both one's life choices and life's circumstances, is worthy of further analysis.

As previously indicated, Western medieval minds had considered the body a corrupted shell encapsulating the unpolluted soul. After the Renaissance, a shift towards an appreciation

and wonderment over the body became more evident. By the nineteenth century the body had become widely regarded as sacred, and in need of continual maintenance. This focus on the body as increasingly central to the modern person's self-identity is apparent in Chris Shilling's *The Body and Social Theory.* His article emphasizes how "in the West there is a tendency to view the body as an on-going project" (Shilling 1993:2). The body must be cared for and maintained for health reasons as well as personal self-esteem. If not well maintained, the effects of ill-treatment are expected to eventually appear on the body, signaling to all a body that has been neglected. I argue that popular reasoning employed in Renaissance European countries, which assert that the state of the outer body indicates an inner goodness or spiritual beauty, is apparent, albeit adapted, to Western contemporary notions of the body. Perhaps the body is no longer maintained and conformed to societal notions of beauty for the sake of "divine or mystical significance" (Synnott 1993:86). Rather, my research indicates that the body is indeed maintained for internal health reasons, but it is also maintained in order to manifest ideas of visible health. In short, the body is maintained for health reasons, and this internal wellness is expected to appear on the body. Thus, a beautiful body is thought to indicate internal wellness, replacing where goodness had once been situated. As health has become increasingly associated with one's appearance, it has consequently become tied to one's sense of self and identity. Those who conform their bodies—specifically but not exclusively their skins—to societal notions are more likely to be perceived as physically and psychologically healthy and competent individuals.

Remarkably, and improbably coincidental, the virtues and sins of modern thought concerning the body perfectly align with those of the skin. Upkeep of the body is communicated as a balanced diet, adequate water intake, regular exercise, and at least seven to eight hours of sleep each night. Those whom successfully incorporate these directions into their lifestyles, or

those whose appearances indicate they follow these directions, are understood as not only physically healthy and economically capable, but as exhibiting desirable characteristics, such as discipline, determination, and motivation. "A strong body is the sign of a strong mind" goes the modern proverb. However, those who fail to abide by these virtues are subjected to being imagined as lazy, self-indulging, overworked, and possibly even mentally unstable. Shilling indicates that the new moral deviants of the Western world have become "those who smoke, drink and consume other drugs as it is difficult not to reflect on the effects of their actions on their bodies and appearances" (Shilling 2003:7). Similarly, the instructions for a healthy, glowing complexion are comparable. Foods rich in salt or sugar are considered damaging to the skin, adequate water intake promotes luminosity and clarity, sufficient "beauty sleep" promotes cell and tissue repair, an absence of stress in one's life is said to augment radiance. When following healthful directions is not possible, or results are not sufficiently detectible, skincare and cosmetics can offer corrective and concealing muscle. The catchphrase used in the indistries, "skincare and cosmetics can hide a multitude of sins," is upheld in this regard.

Cosmetics as tools for deceptions of health, rest, and leisure, ergo a higher social status, continue to be hugely popular today. Many contemporary beauty brands market both their cosmetics and skincare products as bestowing their users with an appearance that they are well rested, maintaining a balanced diet, and reserve an adequate amount of time for leisure. Vichy's *Idéalia Life Serum* credited as a "skin idealizer serum" is described on their website as "the life proof skin idealizer. For a spectacular transformation of skin quality: fights first wrinkles, even skin tone, refines pores and reduces signs of fatigue" (Vichy 2015). In a Vichy commercial the product was acclaimed for transforming the skin by diminishing the effects of "working too much, snacking too much, and sleeping not enough" (YouTube 2015). Two things are important

to highlight here. Firstly, an attractive appearance, signaling an ideal and balanced lifestyle, was, and still is, advertised as achievable by all. Secondly, understanding modern "sins" and "virtues" as one's diet, emotions, and sleep patterns, allows one a deeper understanding of the purposes and professed abilities of skincare and cosmetics.

Diet

Kate Sommerville—a paramedical esthetician with her own skincare line—emphasizes in her book *Complexion Perfection!* the important role one's lifestyle plays in the condition of one's facial skin. In chapter four, titled *Beauty and the Buffet*, Somerville introduces her father-in-law, Dave Somerville, who had been diagnosed with stage five prostate cancer. Rather than undergo surgery and radiation, "Dave's treatment regimen focused on organic foods, a range of immunity-booting supplements, and drinking nothing but purified water—lots of it" (Somerville 2010:45). Somerville recounts that remarkably, by the following year after his diet transformation, his cancer had disappeared. Notably, Somerville indicates the changes she observed in his skin throughout the process. "I couldn't believe it, but I actually saw brown spots and sun damage disappear from Dave's face, in the same way that the cancer vanished" (Somerville 2010:45). She admits to her former trivialization of the role nutrition plays in the condition on one's complexion. "Generally, when people in my line of work see sun spots and pigment issues, we treat them with topical peels, usually aggressively, and topical products. I was blown away, because Dave's skin glowed, I mean, it literally *glowed*" (Somerville 2010:45). After having witnessed this remarkable transformation of both internal and external health, and their interconnected relationship, Somerville attests to "[…] the power, both positive and negative, that […] food choices make on [the] skin (Somerville 2010:45).

The transparency of the skin in regards to diet is a recurring and championed theme on David Avocado Wolfe's website. As a health, eco, nutrition, and natural beauty expert, his website offers informative lifestyle information and inspiration for those curious about natural alternatives. One article on the website "What is Wine Doing to You Face? How Bad Diet Habits Destroy Your Complexion," written by Gillian B, a self-care teacher who educates on the benefits of holistic health, discusses the various adverse effects certain foods can have on the skin. Drawing on naturopathic doctor and skin care specialist, Nigma Talib's book "Reverse The Signs Of Ageing: The Revolutionary Inside-Out Plan To Glowing, Youthful Skin," Gillian B identifies four categories of foods and symptoms to guard against: wine face, sugar face, dairy face, and gluten face. A wine face is described as "pronounced lines or redness between the eyes, droopy eyelids, enlarged pores, dehydrated skin with feathery lines across cheeks, flushed cheeks and nose, deep nasolabial folds" (David Avocado Wolfe 2015). These symptoms are explained as being the result of high levels of alcohol intake, and it is suggested by Gillian B that the consumer with these symptoms abstain from alcohol for three weeks. After this period, the consumer is instructed to adhere to the 80/20 rule, refraining 80% of the time and indulging 20% of the time. Similarly, sugar face, dairy face, and gluten face follow matching patterns in that they are identifiable by epidermal afflictions, and should be remedied by avoiding said foods.

In these cases, diet is imagined to play a major role in the condition of one's skin. Foods deemed aggressors are more often than not unhealthy and advised against. While other foods that contain "ample lean protein, plenty of low-glycemic-load carbohydrates, and moderate amounts of beneficial fat" (Somerville 2010:47) are usually advocated as improving the appearance of the skin. However, when this fails, either one's diet consists of too many aggressing foods, not

enough beneficial foods, or diet choices unsuccessfully impact the skin at all, skincare and cosmetics are marketed as rescuing the skin from deficient diets.

As both a physical and virtual place, Sephora is a beauty retailer that offers more than 200 brands, as well as its own private label. While the actual stores are expansive, and the array of products and brands are seemingly endless, the online stores, separated by country, offer an even wider variety. However, it is precisely this ever-increasing number of brands and products, that can make the terrain difficult to navigate. In the absence of a living beauty expert, Sephora.com has a few features designed to foster a less obscure environment, and make known expert advice and beauty secrets. "The Sephora Glossy" is one such feature that acts as a blog combined with a magazine, where articles and quizzes can be found. One article published in "The Sephora Glossy" highlights the skincare company Shiseido, a Japanese multination company, and one of the oldest cosmetic companies in the world. In celebration of the expansion of one of the brand's skincare lines, Ibuki, the benefits and purposes of the new products are discussed. Ibuki is described by Shiseido as a skincare line designed for the "busy and beautiful" and "for those who like to hustle." The Multi Solution Gel, designed to be used as a last step in one's skincare routine, or even over makeup, targets acne caused by poor diet choices. The gel is described as necessary when "you stress-ate fried foods, and your skin is tattling on you." Although "that fried chicken sandwich was the bomb.com, […] it has this rude tendency to invite acne to your skin's party. You [likely] don't have time to perform a number of steps to combat bumps in front of your sink, so instead, go about your routine and bring along this travel-friendly solution gel. The gelatin-like texture goes a long way, so its salicylic acid spreads easily on skin while providing moisture in one go. You'll be done before your non-foam latte hits the barista bar" (Sephora 2016).

Too Faced, a brand also sold at Sephora, has incorporated a comparable dietary counteraction into their line of products as well. The Hangover Replenishing Face Primer is said to "cure your next beauty hangover with Hangover, a revolutionary makeup primer that's infused with coconut water, a probiotic-based ingredient, and skin revivers which work together to boost skin's radiance, promote elasticity, and help hydrate while locking down makeup for fresher, longer, and more flawless wear" (Sephora 2016). By replenishing the moisture of the skin, depleted by the consumption of alcohol, the primer is described as "an energy drink for the skin" (Sephora 2016). During the holiday season of 2014, as is customary among public relations agents, the primer was gifted to a beauty and fashion blogger whose handle is 'dulcecandy'. The blogger Instagramed the package (Figure 1) she received, which included a note, written on a mock prescription sheet. The note read "your holiday hangover prescription: party hard, look flawless!" (Instagram 2014). Both the marketing and PR for the brand solidify a consistent message. When unable to refrain from sinful indulgences, such as late-night festivities and the beverages customarily involved, this product can be depended on to alleviate the symptoms, in this case epidermal dehydration, that usually accompany this type of modern sin.

Beyond correcting the epidermis' dietary divulgences, a number of skincare brands go a step further by injecting beneficial foods into their products. The idea being that not only can foods be consumed to improve the skin, but these foods can and should be applied to the skin as well. When interviewing Tanya, a commerce student at the University of Toronto, she spoke about the differences between her and her mother's views on skin maintenance. According to her mother, the bigger difference to the skin is "what is put inside [rather] than outside." While skincare still served an important purpose for her mother, Tanya described her mother as observing the 80/20 rule. 80% of one's skin condition comes from diet and 20% from skincare.

Although she recognized the merit of her mother's take on epidermal upkeep, Tanya described "the diet approach [as] more passive, [because] putting things on your face feels more active." Between a passive and more active approach to skin, it was reasoned by Tanya that action is the more viable and preferred option "in a culture that propagates instant results."

Fresh, a skincare company sold at Sephora, is one of many brands that offers both the passivity of nutrition and the assertiveness of skincare, by applying nutritional foods to the skin. Earlier in 2016, the company launched their Vitamin Nectar Vibrancy-Boosting Face Mask. As a chemical exfoliant the purpose of the mask is to boost glow, brighten, and smooth the skin. On the product description page of Sephora's website, Fresh co-founder, Lev Glazman, proclaims that the face mask encompasses her devotion to nourishing the skin with health-giving ingredients.

> "Discoveries come through curiosity. I am inspired—okay, obsessed—by how nutrition affects our skin's health. After years of working closely with the Fresh Research Lab, we have bridged the world of vitamins into skin care or, as we call it, skin nutrition. Developed through the intense study of how essential vitamins and minerals can revitalize and boost the vibrancy of skin, Vitamin Nectar promotes and maintains a healthy complexion." (Lev Glazman, Fresh Co-founder).

I was fortunate enough to receive an invitation (Figure 2) to an event hosted by Sephora, promoting the brand's new release. On August 5, 2016, Barbara and I made our way to the Sephora location on St. Catherine Street. Upon entering the store and making our way to the Fresh counter, a friendly Fresh representative greeted us. The representative, a brand employee who sporadically works in Sephora to promote and advance the customer experience of a given brand, excitedly explained the concept of the product. 50% of the product is made up of fruits,

clementines, oranges, and lemons, which exfoliate and brighten the skin chemically, rather than physically, allowing the product to be suited for sensitive skins. The fruits used were said to be picked once a year, indicating the high standard for superior ingredients. The uniqueness of the product was described in its ability to simultaneously exfoliate and hydrate the skin. Usually, by sloughing off dead skin cells, exfoliators leave the skin in need of hydration. This mask, however, was said to avoid compromising the moisture of the skin for the sake of brightening. Through the product's incorporation of both vitamin C, E, and B5, a hydrating and healing component was said to be secured.

After a briefing on the product, Barbara and I were led to a vanity where we took turns having the mask applied. While the Fresh representative took her time going through a full skincare routine, she furthered her discussion regarding the benefits of the mask. "This product is really about nourishing the skin and putting good stuff on it." Rather than solely focus on what is put in the body, the representative emphasized the role of the mask as ensuring good foods are put on the face as well. However, much like the time and effort needed to ensure a health conscious diet, hectic schedules and lack of motivation were explained by the Fresh representative as the leading cause exfoliating masks are not performed as regularly as they should be. All too often she heard the same complaint, customers did not have enough time to sit around with a face mask on, or at least they imagined they didn't have enough time. According to the representative, the Vitamin mask took this into consideration, and could be applied just before hopping in the shower. The time in which one's regular showering tasks transpired offered the perfect time slot for a ten minute face mask, after which the mask could be rinsed off while still in the shower. Through this method, the representative justified two tasks were being performed at once, and excuses regarding time constraints could be eliminated.

While having the marmalade-like mask applied to our faces, as described by the representative, it became clear that healthy foods could not be simply collected, pureed, and applied to the face. At least not according to Fresh. This was a sentiment never directly said by the representative, but rather communicated by ways of marketing. A display (Figure 3 & Figure 4) of the product on the corner end of the large double-sided vanity, summarized this message. Two wooden crates of oranges were artfully placed on the ground, just below the counter display of a variety of Fresh skincare products including the featured mask, sliced oranges, and beakers, all laid atop a wooden cutting board. Two videos on both the Fresh and Sephora websites show the process of the fruits being plucked from the orchards to being scientifically manipulated, through lab-looking equipment, to being poured out into the green glass jars the masks are sold in. Similarly, Sephora Canada's Instagram (Figure 5 & Figure 6) posted a picture of the mask with the caption written by Cofounder, Lev.

> "I set out to create a product like no other that is rich in vitamins and minerals. We started calling it a jam mask because I wanted half the formula to be oranges, lemons, and clementines. The high level of natural ingredients gives you powerful benefits, but you need the technology to deliver the ingredients to your skin. It took us 4 years to create the mask!" #ItsMyJam (Instagram August 2016)

It is made clear, through my in-store experience as well as researching the mask, that the excellence of the product is not solely in its ingredients, but also in the science used to transform the product into something beneficial for topical application. Alone, harvested foods are understood as lacking the required potency to exfoliate and hydrate the skin. Rather, a marriage

of science and nature are communicated as vital to the performance of the product, and justify the considerably substantial price tag.

Caudalie is another company that shares a similar commitment to food ingredients in their skincare line. All Caudalie products draw on what the brand calls "the power of the vine" in that they are infused with grapes, grape vine sap, or grape water. Grapes are boasted by Caudalie as being beneficial for the skin, as well as one's overall health, as they are high in antioxidants and rich in minerals. A blurb about the brand on Sephora's webpage tells the tale of the company's conception and purpose:

> "In 1993, college sweethearts Mathilde and Bertrand Thomas took a summer job at a family winery in Bordeaux. There, they met Dr. Vercauteren, who introduced them to the natural antioxidant powers of the grape vine. Inspired by this discovery, the couple developed the world's first luxury vinotherapy skin care line to use stabilized grape seed polyphenols."

At the beginning of June 2016 I was once again invited to a Caudalie event (Figure 7) hosted by Sephora. On June 9th Barbara, who had by this point become my go-to companion for event attendings, accompanied me to the Caudalie stand-alone boutique in Carrefour Laval. Overlooking the mall's indoor garden, which included an enormous birdcage filled with dozens of colourful birds, water fountains and brick-tiled floors, the Caudalie location felt serene and airy. Inside the store (Figure 8), the décor made a distinct effort to further the feeling of being outdoors. The shelves resembled wooden crates and the large island sink, centered in the middle of the boutique, borrowed inspiration from wine barrels. At the back of the small location, tucked under an archway, stood a brightly lit photograph of a vineyard. Clear, circular light fixtures

hung at various heights just above the island, their design a distinct nod to the essence of the company: the grape.

The outdoorsy theme fostered in the store's location is carried into the company's products online as well. Products are photographed outdoors, with lush green backdrops, or with ingredients such as nuts, plants, flowers, and of course grapes, leaning against bottles and jars, indicating their ingredient presence, and therefore augmentation of the products. The company's harnessing of nature was not only implicitly conveyed through the décor of the physical and virtual places of vending, but also explicitly stated during the mini facials performed on Barbara and myself. As was the intention of the event, skin consultations and tailored skincare routines were conducted. While applying each grape comprised product, my appointed skin consultant discussed the particular benefits. The grape oil in the milk cleanser was meant to soften and hydrate the skin, the viniferine, an extract from grape vine sap, in their Glycolic Peel Mask and Vinoperfect Radiance Serum, was proclaimed to reduce dark spots and promote a more even skin tone. Similarly, the Moisturizing Sorbet Cream selected for my skin, was explained to contain the polyphenols (an antioxidant compound) found in grape seeds, and vinolevure, an extract from wine yeast, and grape water, both attributed for their abilities to encourage the skin's hydration retention.

Something worth noting here, as was the case with Fresh's products as well, grapes alone are communicated as being beneficial to the skin, but scientific tampering is insinuated as necessary to capitalize on the benefits nature has to offer. The Caudalie website recounts that throughout history, "young girls used to apply the sap from vine stalks to their faces and hands to reduce dark spots and clarify the complexion" (Caudalie 2016). And while this was effective to a certain extent, real effectiveness was only made possible when "Professor Vercauteren

succeeded in isolating a pure and natural active ingredient from grapevine sap known as Viniferine" (Caudalie 2016). As indicated by the brand, "the vine is an inexhaustible treasure of benefits and riches" (Caudalie 2016), but this treasure is only fully unlocked through scientific employment. In fact, thes powerful coupling of nature and science is described by co-founder, Mathilde Thomas, as being suited for "women who, like [her], don't want to choose between effectiveness and naturalness, between glamour and ecology" (Caudalie 2016).

To summarize, the recipe many brands follow, most notably that of Fresh and Caudalie, is an incorporation of a desirable kind of nature, strengthened by the application of the latest scientific technology. The result is a product comprised of both age-old ingredients and knowledge, paired with the mystification of scientific prowess, indicating a dependable and potent product worth investing in. As stated on Ulta's Instagram (Figure 9), a cosmetic and skincare vendor similar to Sephora, when promoting the company Origins, the caption read "It's science: beauty is best when it's closest to nature" (Instagram September 2016).

Emotions

To be sure, one's diet is not the sole factor that is imagined as discernible through the skin. One's emotions are regarded as having equal impact. In Somerville's third chapter, titled *The Emotional Connection,* she asserts that "our skin can easily betray what's going on in our hearts and minds. Since it's our largest and only visible organ, we often notice the effects of our feelings on our skin before anywhere else in our bodies" (Somerville 2010:29). Somerville shares her experience with a patient who had "the worst cystic acne [she'd] ever seen in [her] life. [The patient] was so congested that every single pore had become infected, and she had terrible scarring as well" (Somerville 2010:30). Somerville goes onto explain that rather than the topical treatments and internal drugs that the patient had been prescribed by previous doctor's,

her recommendation of treatments, products, and lifestyle changes were what cleared her skin. However, this did not last long. The cystic acne returned. Somerville's next approach was psychological. "I sat her down and said. "Let's talk." It took a while, but I finally found out what was going on with her. It turned out her job had been really stressful because there was someone she didn't get along with, and this had brought up other issues in her life" (Somerville 2010:30-31). The patient ended up quitting her job and subsequently overcoming her acne for good. Somerville goes on to list examples of a number of different studies in support of her claim that "emotions have a huge impact on [the] skin" (Somerville 2010:32), however, she identifies chronic stress as the most damaging emotion to the skin. Things like "anxiety or fear over ongoing problems such as debt, a negative work situation, illness, an unhappy relationship, loneliness, or just a combination of factors that make up a modern crazy lifestyle" places the body in a constant state of emergency (Somerville 2010:34). Along with other body afflictions, such as a depressed immune system, Somerville affirms that for many, "chronic stress accumulates in skin problems. Whether we're talking about eczema, acne, or premature aging, we stand a much better chance of keeping them under control if our immune system is functioning strongly" (Somville 2010:34). While the paramedical esthetician confesses that a stress-free existence is nearly impossible, and furthermore undesirable as stress can be the catalyst to motivation and stimulation, one is instructed to deal with stress and confront feelings of anxiety as part of a skin-care regimen. Somerville's stress-busting activities include: paced-breathing, progressive relaxation, meditation, yoga, exercise, sweat, and massage (Somerville 2010:35-40).

As indicated by Somerville, one's skin can have a troubling tendency to display one's stresses and concerns. However, on the other side of the coin, one's joy and happiness are

imagined to radiate through the skin, augmenting the skin in a desirable manner. “The Happy Skin Tag” was a Youtube video started by The Body Shop in order to promote their new vitamin C range of products. The tag video, a video in which Youtubers upload and “tag” or challenge others to film and upload videos answering a set of predetermined questions, floated around Youtube in 2015. The tag began with routine questions: What is your skin type? What are your skincare concerns? However, some unprecedented questions centering around happiness appeared in the tag as well: How do you define happiness? What makes you laugh every day? What is your happy place? Responses from three videos I documented varied. ThePersianbabe mentioned that her definition of happiness included confidence, while Samantha Maria indicated that happiness shouldn’t be obsessively worked towards, because like a butterfly, only once it stops trying to be caught, it lands on one’s shoulder (1:30). Likewise, happy places mainly centered around the home. Inthefrow mentioned hers was in bed, after a shower. Samantha Maria’s and ThePersianbabe’s were at home. The incorporation of questions of internal contentment alongside questions of personal skincare regiment indicates The Body Shop’s, and perhaps the Youtubers’, consciousness of desirable skin being the result of harmonious internal and external maintenances. Along with a topical ritual both morning and night, the tag communicates that things that make one laugh, or promote happiness must also be routinely practiced. “The happier you are as a person, shines through your skin” (Inthefrow 3:59).

Sleep

As the third and final lifestyle impact I will cover, sleep is widely encouraged, supplemented, and substituted by a number of different skincare companies and authorities. The brand *Banish,* dedicated to treating and *banishing* acne, posted, via their *Instagram,* (Figure 10 & Figure 11) the apparent reasons for adequate amounts of sleep. According to *Banish’s* post,

"poor sleep=poor skin," and that sleep is detrimental to the skin's condition because "without it, your skin won't have enough time to repair itself leading to faster wrinkles, and more hyperpigmentation because stress can release a hormone called adrenocorticotropic that activates your melanin producing cells to make more pigment" (Instagram October 2016). Similarly, *Allure Magazine's* March 2014 edition wrote a small paragraph titled "Sleep-Deprived Skin" (Figure 78). The small blurb, written by Lois B. Morris, referenced a study conducted by Elma Baron, an associate professor of dermatology at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, and commissioned by Esteé Lauder. Of the 60 women ages 30-49, "those who reported typically sleeping five hours or less had more fine lines, uneven pigmentation, and sagging skin on their faces than other women did" (Allure 2014:148). Conversely, women who generally slept seven to nine hours each night "had better retention of skin moisture and superior damage recovery from sunburn" (Allure 2014:148). The study concluded that skin cells are supposedly repaired during sleep and those who managed a recommended number of hours of sleep, were said to allow their skin more time to correct damages.

In order to encourage the magazine's promotion of adequate sleep, an online article was recommended to readers "13 Bad Bedtime Habits That Deprive You of Sleep." The online Allure article written by Daisy Shaw, advised its readers on the importance of sleep as "a good night's sleep doesn't just boost your mood—it also improved your looks. Yet only 25 percent of Americans get the recommended eight hours per night" (Allure 2010). The online article "compile[d] the most common mistakes, so you can learn how to get the most—and best—rest possible" (Allure 2010). Of these nighttime "mistakes" however, only ten proved to be sleep inhibitors. Watching television before bed, checking the time, talking on the phone, sleeping in a warm room, leaving lights on, drinking caffeine, smoking, drinking a cocktail, sleeping in

restrictive clothing, sleeping on one's side or stomach, were all described as sleep evading habits that should be curtailed. Interestingly, the last three "mistakes" included going to bed with makeup on, skipping anti-aging products, and disregarding brushing and flossing. Although these do not interfere with actual sleep quality or quantity, they are advised against because they are imagined to disrupt a coveted benefit of sleep, augmented beauty. According to the article, "the slight increase in body temperature that happens [during] sleep actually revs up the absorption of skin-care ingredients" (Allure 2010). The article advises it readers to "take advantage of that fact. Nighttime slathering with super ingredients such as retinol and glycerin allows your skin to put them to their best use" (Allure 2010). In the same vein, however, the skin's supposed intensified absorption rate means that it more readily absorbs whatever is on the skin, including residual makeup. If skin-hindering products are left on, and skin-beneficial products are not applied, readers are warned of the dire consequences, such as "[…] clogged pores, which lead to blemishes and blackheads" (Allure 2010).

In this regard, evidence is put forward by the magazine that supports the claim of sleep improving one's appearance. However, the article's underlying message is that sleep alone is not a remedy for desirable skin. It is suggested that a skincare routine of some kind must be performed. If disregarded, sleep risks hindering the skin, rather than improving it. Aveeno's commercial highlighting their "Positively Radiant Daily Moisturizer," features their spokesperson, actress Jennifer Aniston, sharing her advise for "healthy looking, radiant skin" (Youtube 2014 0:00). Her two instructions are clear, "a good night's sleep and Aveeno" (Youtube 2014 0:04). The commercial highlights the product's ability to even skin tones, but implies that the product's full benefits are only obtained if the user sleeps adequately. Alone, both sleep and Aveeno's moisturizer are indicated as favourably impacting the skin, but

combined the effects are communicated as more potent. Similarly, Origins, a skincare company whose slogan asserts they are "powered by nature, proven by science," ran an ad (Figure 12) in Allure magazine highlighting their nighttime moisturizer appropriately named "High-Potency Night-A-Mins." In the ad the moisturizer sits below a starry night sky on a bed of neroli, whose aroma, along with the included valerian and vanilla, are meant to encourage sleep. According to the ad and online description of the product, while asleep the moisturizer "time-release[s] exfoliating extracts plus vitamins C, E & H minerals and rich moisture to help delete dullness and restore smoothness" (Allure 2014). Essentially, the moisturizer is said to mimic, and therefore maximize, the skin's cell turnover and regeneration process that supposedly occurs during sleep. Both Aveeno and Origins communicate comparable messages, sleep is good for the skin, but sleep accompanied by the correct array of skincare is infinitely better.

Similar to the marketing pattern of nutrition on the skin, there are certain products that are said to augment the effects of eating well or sleeping adequately, but there are also products that offer to substitute rather than supplement. Clinique's "Turnaround" range of products are a prime example. An ad (Figure 13.1 & Figure 13.2) in Allure featured two products from the range, the "Turnaround Daytime Revitalizing Moisturizer" and "Turnaround Revitalizing Treatment Oil." In the two-page spread, the ad reads "your schedule says you're busy. Your face doesn't" (Allure May 2015). In order to counter dulled skin, supposedly apparent in those who regularly forgo the suggested seven to eight hours of sleep, Clinique's products claim to bestow the skin with "[…] radiance-boosting moisturizer awaken[ing] skin's fresh natural glow. And mere drops of our energizing oil lock in luminosity" (Allure May 2015). By "awakening" the skin, or "deliver[ing] a fresh, luminous, wide-awake glow" (Clinique Online), the ad and online description suggests the user will feel refreshed and look as though they benefited from a good

night's sleep, when in fact they did not. "Woke up like this? Of course you did" (Allure May 2015). Another product from Clinique, although not part of the Turnaround range, the "Pep-Start Eye Cream," offers a similar awakening, sleep-replenishing solution. Similar to the Allure ad, the effects of the eye cream are not only designed to be visual, but tangible as well. The hydrating and brightening capabilities of the product are said to make "you look and feel refreshed, wide awake, and ready for anything in as little as three seconds" (Sephora). Additionally, the cream is described as having a long-term effect on the skin as the peptides in the product "[…] help support natural collagen reserves that can be threatened by stress, fatigue, and lack of sleep—the tell-tale signs of your busy life" (Sephora). The Clinique products mentioned are marketed as effective fatigue relief. When one's schedule does not permit one to be genuinely rested, marketing seems to reason that at least a more time-effective alternative can be relied on.

A desire for products to deliver what hectic schedules cannot permit is apparent among an array of skincare brands. Foreo, a company that specializes in battery-operated epidermal gadgets, was featured on Sephora Canada's Instagram (Figure 14 & Figure 15) promoting their "Iris Illuminating Eye Massager." The gadget's pulsing is meant to allow eye cream to be more effectively absorbed and reduce the appearance of dark circles, puffiness, crow's feet, fine lines, and wrinkles, all associated with both ageing and fatigue. With the help of the tool, one is instructed to "take your finger off the snooze button! Get the look of a full night's [sleep] with Foreo Iris Brightening Eye Tool" (Instagram March 2016). On the same Instagram (Figure 16 & Figure 17) account, skincare brand Murad broadcasted a similar message, but suggested a four-step multitasking wellness regiment. Step one instructs the user to apply three pumps of Murad's "Eye Lift Firming Treatment." Step two includes placing the included pads under the eyes where

the moist product will secure them into place. Step three directs the user to leave the pads applied for ten minutes, during which an abdominal workout is suggested. After the final step the pads are removed and bright eyes are said to be revealed. While it is not made clear whether the recommended workout attributes to brightened eyes, it is more likely that hectic schedules are taken into consideration here, and products offer multitasking solutions in addition to the solutions they already supply.

The expectation of, and perhaps dependence on, skincare to supply the skin with a rested appearance, as well as sensation, is apparent in an Instagram post published by Pixiwoo, sister makeup artists who began on Youtube and have a considerable following. The published post (Figure 18), most likely a re-post rather than an original post, reads "I'm looking for a moisturizer that hides the fact that I've been tiered since 2010" (Instagram April 2016). While the post exaggerates the expectation for a moisturizer for comedic effect, the hope, on the part of the consumer, for a suitable sleep substitute remains apparent. When a goodnight's sleep is not offered as a viable solution, a purchasable time-effective solution is communicated as the only solution.

A Yogi's Guide to Skincare: To Know is To Control

The skin as revealing of personal information, and indicative of internal workings, was a sentiment upheld in a yoga skincare workshop I attended in the fall of 2015. The poster for the one-hour skincare workshop read "Glowing Skin From Within: A Yogi's Guide to Skin Care." One of the aims of the workshop, held in a yoga studio I frequent, was described as "discover[ing] customized skin care for your hot yoga practice." On the sunny, yet brisk day of the workshop, I made my way to the Yoga studio early, determined to get a good spot. The event was held in the larger of two practice rooms, and attendees were provided with pillows and mats

to sit on. Upon walking in, I was greeted by the yoga instructor running the workshop. I briefly explained my work and purpose for data collection, of which she was intrigued. After a few questions of inquiry about my work, and how exactly I was academically studying the world of beauty and self-care, she welcomed me into the room. Walking me over to the pile of cushions and mats up for grabs, she complemented my skin and asked if I had anything on, like a foundation or tinted moisturizer. Surprised by the comment, I replied I was completely barefaced save for a moisturizer and primer. In this moment I felt proud of my skin and as though I belonged in this group of solely women attendees who looked after their skin, or at least took time out of their day to hear about how to best look after their skin from a certified esthetician.

The leader of the workshop introduced herself as Lawrence, both a trained yoga instructor and an esthetician. The class began with an explanation of the benefits of yoga for the body in general, but the skin in particular. “Breathing and moving encourages lymphatic movement, and the lymph fluid is something that needs to be actively moved because it does not move on its own.” In this way Lawrence described yoga as intrinsically good for the skin. Similarly, the workshop also covered specific yoga postures that were considered good for one’s health, and therefore good for the skin. Twisting poses were said to help drain the lymphatic system, a venyasa flow was explained as aiding the elimination of toxins, plow was described as calming the nervous system, any pose that turned the practicing yogi upside down was described as purifying the blood, and so on.

In addition to the acclaimed physical benefits for the skin, the emotional component of yoga was discussed as well. Meditation, or *shavasana,* the final resting pose in a hot yoga practice, of which all other poses prepare for, was explained as particularly beneficial for the mind and therefore the skin as well. According to Lawrence, during meditation, emotions and

stresses are momentarily put on pause. With continual practice, meditation was explained as allowing a person to "let go of the emotions that show up on the skin." Resulting in a softened, less lined complexion. Lawrence explained that inner turmoil and stress can become visible on the skin. But by releasing stress, or at least allowing the nervous system a break from the stresses of daily life, the signs of stress on the skin reduce, resulting in an improved complexion. As indicated by Lawrence, if the inner workings of the body are calmed and less stressed, the outer skin ought to be as well.

However, despite the epidermal perks of yoga, Lawrence revealed that it was after incorporating hot yoga practice into her life that she developed adult cystic acne. The irony of a supposed health-giving, skin ameliorating practice *causing* a deplorable skin issue was not focused on too heavily. Rather, hot yoga was maintained as good for the body, but correct steps were communicated as necessary in order for the skin to benefit fully from the practice, and not be hindered by it. Lawrence proceeded to list her skincare recommendations for hot yoga practitioners. Before entering the hot yoga room, it was strongly suggested that all makeup be removed and the face freshly cleansed. Similar to sleep, being in the hot room opens the pores and whatever is one the face is more readily absorbed. For this reason, Lawrence advised all harmful products, like cosmetics and grime, be removed, while something advantageous, like dry oil, be applied prior to class. In this way, one could truly benefit from the accelerated permeability of the skin during hot practice. While class is in session, wiping sweat should be avoided as this spreads the germs and toxins being released from the body. If absolutely necessary, the face should only be lightly dapped, dragging or wiping were strongly discouraged. Lawrence's suggestions also included a minimum of ten minutes in the final shavasana pose in order to allow the body a chance to cool down, and the pores to contract back to normal.

Showering directly after practice was described as crucial, as hot practice encourages one to sweat out toxins, and if not rinsed off immediately, they risked being reabsorbed back into the body.

Besides developing a more acne-conscious or acne-curbing yoga skincare routine for herself, Lawrence also tackled her diet, and recommended anyone suffering from any kind of skin issue make an elimination diet their first course of action. She recommended, and stated many holistic doctors would prescribe the same: an elimination of all sugars and dairy in the diet, as these are generally identified as skin aggressing foods. If the skin improved after this, each would be reintroduced separately back into the diet, and the skin would be observed for any flare-ups. If any undesirable symptoms occurred to the skin while a type of food was being reintroduced, that food would be identified as the skin aggressor, and a recommended avoidance would be determined. Due to the uniqueness of each individual's epidermis and body, these results vary from person to person. So rough guidelines concerning one's diet were provided for the class. Eating fresh produce was recommended, tomatoes were considered good for reducing sun spots because they contain lycopene, anti-oxidant rich foods were credited for preventing free-radicals from attacking the skin, seafood and oils were described as containing fats that were good for the skin, brown rice was recognized as helping the skin to retain moisture, and so on.

After the list of dietary recommendations was orally administered, a young woman raised her hand and countered Lawrence's praise of tomatoes. She claimed they had caused severe breakouts along her jaw area, and a specialist had told her that tomatoes were not good for women and should only be eaten sparingly. Lawrence admitted her surprise towards this young woman's comment, but replied that "everybody is different and everybody's body will react to things differently. I'm giving a general list of foods that are good for the skin, there will always

be exceptions to the rules. Our job is to discover what works for us, and what doesn't." This depiction of a journey of trial and error that one must pass through in order to better know the skin, its likes and dislikes, its patterns and behaviours, is a common sentiment among those who treat, or administer treatment for the skin. *Banish* published a post (Figure 19 & Figure 20) on Instagram that captured this sentiment. In the post, a picture of a coconut is featured with the posed question "will coconut oil cause breakouts?" (Instagram June 2016). Beneath the photo, the caption lists the beneficial properties of coconut oil that have led to its popularity. "It's antibacterial, high in antioxidants, keeps skin hydrated, and is anti-inflammatory" (Instagram June 2016). However, the caption continues to read "But even with all those benefits, there is the chance that coconut oil could clog your pores and cause acne in some individuals. You won't know until you try" (Instagram June 2016).

In order to properly familiarize oneself with one's skin, to become more sensitive to its reactions to our actions, Lawrence mentioned face mapping. A practice rooted in Indian Ayurvedic teaching, face mapping was offered as additional evidence of the relation between physical health and the skin. Drawing Mindbodygreen, a website dedicated to naturalness and wellness, and whose newsletter Lawrence mentioned she was subscribed to and recommended, Lawrence described face mapping as the understanding that certain areas of the face are connected to an organ or body part. The skin is therefore "read," by ways of observing the geographical placement of flare-ups, in order to determine internal treatment or adjustments that may need to be made. For example, the forehead is thought to be connected to the nervous system and digestive system. If breakouts are experienced in this region, it is suggested one "reduce the amount of processed foods" and "incorporate yoga and meditation to keep stress low" (Mindbodygreen 2015). Similarly, the nose is understood as being tied to the circulatory

system. Excessive breakouts in this region suggest a blood pressure issue. In order to combat this, mindbodygreen suggests an increase in "essential fatty acids like, avocado, flax, olive oil, and avoid[ing] alcohol, coffee and spicy foods" (Mindbodygreen 2015). The example given during the workshop were xanthelasma, bumps containing fat deposits, which occur around the eyes and are said to be caused by high cholesterol.

Throughout the workshop Lawrence continued to bounce between instructions for internal care for the skin, by ways of maintaining good health through diet, and external care for the skin, through skincare and yoga-specific requirements. According to the workshop leader, topical application was the newest consideration to join the trend of wellness among yogis. Besides physical activity and eating well, skincare was described as a recent, yet critical, consideration to healthy, glowing skin. "Why stop at feeding the skin from the inside [through yoga and nutrition], the outside must be fed as well" declared Lawrence. This external "feeding" consisted of a morning and nighttime skincare routine. The core steps of both a.m. and p.m. routines began by using a cleanser, although this was said to be optional in the morning, a serum, and a moisturizer or an oil. In the mornings one was instructed to finish off with an SPF and exfoliation was suggested 2-3 times per week in the evenings. Additionally, facemasks were also suggested 2-3 times per week. Pore clarifying clay masks as well as do-it-yourself masks using fruits and vegetables were regarded with high esteem. In fact, Lawrence suggested the class look up recipes for facemasks as there were "a plethora of them online." It should be noted that among those who practice more "naturalistic" lifestyles, this often extends to yogis, science and western medicine are commonly regarded with skepticism. Thus, the scientific modification of plant ingredients, as seen with Fresh and Caudalie's products, are not always well received among these groups. This is likely why Lawrence indirectly suggested her audience "keep it

simple" by skipping the science and applying only foods directly to their skins, rather than suggest creams and cleansers. In fact, it was while making masks in her kitchen that Lawrence discovered raw honey as her acne "miracle cure." Not to be mistaken for a cure-all, it was explicitly pointed out that raw honey was what worked for *her*, and what *her* skin reacted favourably to. But by applying different ingredients, becoming more aware of flare-ups, be they associated with problem areas or certain foods, one was understood as "getting to know" one's unique skin. Through obtaining this knowledge and awareness, Lawrence suggested one stood a better chance of gaining control over this revealing organ.

The Messages Written on The Skin

As previously indicated, the value of gaining control over one's skin is rewarding because of the message it conveys. When speaking with Diana, an informant who works at a skincare and cosmetic place of retail, I asked her if all the time and money people pour into the endeavor of good skin was worthwhile. Her response was fairly straightforward: is it worthwhile because our society is superficial, and for better or for worse, skin is something people notice and factor into their impression of another. Good skin was even described by Diana as a beacon of hope when all other aspects of one's life might not be going to plan. "Let's say you're struggling in life, you're struggling in school, you're struggling with your job, at least the one thing you have is your skin." Of course this "having" of good skin was not something to be privately enjoyed. According to Diana, "[the skin] makes such a big impact too [because] people judge so much on your skin and how you look." By lacking clear and radiant skin, Diana expressed that "people may think you don't take care of yourself." As indicated by Diana, what others think is not to be taken lightly either, as it is often the impression we leave on others that can be the difference between rejection and opportunity. "Let's say two people are equally as

qualified for a job, and one person is glowing, radiant, and looks healthy, versus another person who may have redness all over, might look a little tired, a little drained, and a little flakey. The candidate with better skin will probably leave a more lasting impression and somehow seem as though they are more qualified." During a conversation with Barbara a similar sentiment was echoed. Besides the skin being an important factor in determining a person's beauty, Barbara also insisted that "on a subconscious level, the skin will factor into your opinion of a person, your first impression of them, who they are as a person. Someone with greasy skin is thought of as dirty, unwashed, sweaty, and probably smells. Someone with acne is also read as someone who is dirty and gross, and someone who is not taking care of themselves like they should. But someone with clear skin has their shit together, probably has a good diet." As indicated by both Diana and Barbara, the importance of good skin is the importance of looking well maintained. Having good skin communicates to others, whether it is accurate or not, that the three categories discussed above: diet, emotions, and sleeping schedules are well balanced and subsequently, the individual is well maintained.

Given that good skin is not only upheld as a form of success in its own right, but also as an indication of a successful internal wellness, is gaining an impression of a person through their skin shallow like Diana claims? Synnott presents a few modern adages that "warn insistently against taking beauty as face value: "Beauty is only skin deep", "Appearances are deceptive", "All that glitters is not gold", "Handsome is as handsome does", and "Never judge a book by its cover" (Synnott 1993:95). According to Synnott, these caution against supposing a pleasing exterior as indicative of a virtuous interior, and are commonly ignored as "the beauty mystique reigns" (Synnott 1993:95). However, as I have attempted to demonstrate, these well-known warnings are ignored today for different reasons. No longer an indication of a virtuous morality,

good skin serves as an indication of a virtuous lifestyle, and perhaps because various scientific studies, facts, and statistics lend validity to the belief of internal and external connection, the warnings against "judging a book by its cover" is ignored because it is effectively countered.

In any case, superficial or not, appearing as though certain virtuous lifestyle choices have been met is a desirable and lucrative business, one which skincare and cosmetic industries have tapped into. Whether they are supplemented or substituting, purchasable solutions are communicated via marketing and advertising as indispensable. Regardless of whether one is making virtuous or sinful life choices, cosmetics and especially skincare offer an augmented exterior, and therefore a presumably augmented interior as well.

Skin Aides as Weapons

Powerful Products, Powerful Mindsets

Given the supposed restorative abilities of both skincare and cosmetics, it comes as little surprise they are relied on for psychological or mental restoration as well. Diana's sentiment: "when you feel good, you look good," has been discussed in relation to the supposed interconnectedness between one's inner health and epidermal satisfaction. If one's physical health is in order, it was stated during Lawrence's workshop that the "skin will show it by glowing it." However, the reverse of this belief is also regarded as true. Looking good on the outside can cause one to feel good on the inside by ways of lifting one's mood, or as a source of strength.

A post (Figure 21) on Pixiwoos' Instagram, illustrated the function of cosmetics as more than a method of appearing more attractive. In the post, five different animated lipsticks are lined

in a row. The caption below, attributed to Elizabeth Taylor, reads “put on some lipstick and pull yourself together.” The post indicates that lipstick can allow the user to appear more polished and therefore “pulled together.” The instructive post also suggests applying lipstick causes the user to *feel* more pulled together, and therefore ready to tackle whatever may lie ahead. Tarte, a cosmetics and skincare company, posted (Figure 22) a similar message via Instagram. In a post published October of 2016, the outline of a pair of wing-lined eyes is depicted with the wording “war paint.” A few months later in January of 2017, Tarte posted a similar post (Figure 23 & Figure 24), this time with just text, “if u can do liquid liner u can do anything” (Instagram January 2017). The caption of the photo reads “truer words have never been spoken! #factsoflife” (Instagram January 2017). Both of Tarte’s Instagram posts reaffirm the idea that skincare and cosmetics are applied in order to prepare one’s appearance for the day, eyeliner is applied as part of one’s routine of getting ready. But they also imply that the application of eyeliner readies the wearer’s mind for whatever battles, trivial or significant, their day may hold. Therefore, lining one’s eyes can be said to have two benefits to the user. Firstly, eyeliner is credited as capable of elevating the users appearance. As indicated in an Instagram post (Figure 25) by a Youtube beauty influencer, jennyclairefox, “I can’t believe drawing a black line across my eyelids makes me feel 10x prettier (Instagram April 2016). Secondly, putting aside the humour of the post’s minimization of eyeliner, drawing this black line is no simple undertaking. Many individuals have attested to this, and many brands have responded by continually creating products that attempt to simplify the adroit task. By prevailing in this challenging endeavor, Tarte’s second post indicates any obstacle, by comparison, can be considered achievable. The implied secondary purpose attributed to winged eyeliner is less easily visually discerned, and more in line with mental preparation.

As pointed out in an Instagram post (Figure 26) by Kim Kardashian's makeup artist makeupbymario, to put oneself together in a pleasing manner is a powerful tool, sometimes even referred to as "slaying." The makeup artist owes his celebrity status to the popularity of his work on Kim Kardashian, in part known for her makeup. In the post, a t-shirt with the definition of "slay" is photographed. It reads, "to kill, murder by way of hair, makeup, and dressing exceptionally well" (Instagram March 2016). In this instance, not only has the individual's pleasing presentation likely bestowed them with a confident and confrontational disposition, but the individual's appearance is noted by others, or at least presumed by the individual as noted by others, someone who is capable, powerful, and a force to be reckoned with.

Weaponized Marketing

Possibly due to the powerful feeling and impactful image bestowed by skincare, and cosmetics in particular, given their instant, nonpermanent, and removable likeness to armor or weaponry, many companies have propagated the notion of skin aides as weaponry wielded by women. A tweet (Figure 27) by @Y2SHAF stated "girls talk about makeup like its a fuckin weapon, 'What eye shadow is that?' Oh its the MAC 34XZ10 Pro Supreme Blend 10 points to Gryffindor" (Twitter February 2016). While @Y2SHAF is correct to recognize these products are spoken about aggressively and as if they can inflict harm, often they are named or packaged as such. An ad (Figure 28) by cosmetic company Urban Decay in *Vogue*'s September 2016 issue, highlights the company's "Vice" lipsticks. The lipstick tube bears an unmistakable resemblance to bullet casings. In the place of a bullet, a retractable lipstick sits in the casing instead. Although they are identical in shape to their "nocturnal" lipsticks, which are a more feminine and playful metallic purple, the "Vice" lipsticks mimic the gold and silver of actual bullets in their casings. The ad declares "too much vice is never enough," warranting the "100 addictive shades. 6

indulgent finishes" (Vogue September 2016) the lipstick is available in. The text presents the lipsticks as a weakness, or a sinful indulgence, that wearers are encouraged and permitted to satisfy. However, the packaging suggests the lipsticks serve as effective protection or confrontational assistance. If combined, the message communicated by Urban Decay is that their lipsticks offer a degree of power or advantage, in a similar way that a gun might. However, to draw on, or to need this type of advantage has a wickedness about it, and it can quickly become an insatiable desire as different shades serve different purposes, different occasions, and different moods. What may have started as a desire for just one lipstick, as to elevate one's look, can quickly spiral into a need for many different shades. Urban Decay encourages their customers to surrender to this desire.

Besides the intended evocation of offensive or combative weapons, certain products, more so skincare, seek to capture a more defensive spirit. Skincare company Murad's primer, Invisiblur Perfecting Shield stands out as one such product. The primer, or "invisible skin perfecting shield blends together advanced treatment, primer and SPF technologies to immediately blur and protect while combating the signs of aging" (Murad 2016). As a primer, the product somewhat awkwardly straddles both categories of skincare and cosmetics. Intended as a last step in skincare, and first step in cosmetics, primers seek to perfect the skin, catering to the wearers needs, and sometimes offer a degree of environmental protection as well. The tri-purpose Invisiblur treats the skin, temporarily smooths it, and offers protection from the sun and free radicals. While the product's treatment component, its incorporation of mushroom peptides, are said to diminish the look of fine lines and wrinkles, a large part of the product's action against adverse skin conditions lies in its shield against UV rays. Likewise, the blurring or smoothing effect of the product is understood to create a smooth base, or smoother base.

Although not implicitly advertised as such, this blurred and perfected base can be understood as a shield in and of itself. Presenting a perfected image to the world that conceals undesirable skin texture. Its protective and concealing capability is what likely earned the product's description as a shield.

While some companies place more emphasis on weaponizing their products, others focus on the delivery of the product. Neither a bullet nor a shield, drugstore cosmetic company Rimmel London's Wonder'lash Volume Colourist Mascara is not presented as possessing the capabilities of a typical weapon. Rather, as stated in their television advert, "the lash tint complex makes bare lashes darker in two weeks, so lashes are always dressed to kill, with and without mascara" (Youtube 2016). In correspondence with the modern definition "to slay", the mascara offers the wearer a semi-permanent appearance that is itself the instrument of combat. Rather than dressing and undressing, Rimmel's mascara offers the wearer a means to always be dressed, always impressive looking, and therefore always at the ready for any kind of confrontation. As indicated in the description box of the Youtube ad, Wonder'lash Volume Colourist wearers are instructed not to be "scared to go bare!" (Youtube 2016). Their weaponry endures.

Giorgio Armani's newest addition to their range of foundations, Power Fabric Foundation, draws on a similar, more literal idea as dressing to kill. In keeping with their primary role as an haute couture fashion house, all Armani foundations are meant to emulate a kind of textile. While Power Fabric is not necessarily intended to feel like the material of a power suit, as these are often made with thicker materials and therefore undesirable for the sensation of a foundation, Power Fabric's aim is to make the wearer feel the kind of invincibility they would in a power suit. In a Youtube ad, a quote by Giorgio Armani is first displayed, it reads "the new power suit is the confidence you have in yourself" (Youtube 2017). To the song

"The Power", by Snap!, the ad proceeds to feature a young woman applying her Power Fabric Foundation as part of her daily getting ready routine. After sweeping the product on with a brush, the model/actress holds challenging-like eye contact with the audience. As she continues to ready herself for the day, moving into her walk-in closet she sifts through an array of monochromatic collard blazers and jackets. Settling on a woolen trench-coat, she wraps herself in the outerwear, concealing her silk negligee beneath. Her outfit choice makes two things clear. Firstly, a power suit does not necessarily need to be a traditional pantsuit and jacket combination. It can be whatever the wearer feels most poised and composed in. Although a thicker, more substantial material seems crucial. Secondly, the power of the power suit of choice lies in its ability to make the wearer look appealing by accentuating certain elements and concealing others. In the Youtube ad, this is done metaphorically when the protagonist covers her flimsy nightgown with her overcoat. This indicates that her vulnerability is safely hidden away, just like any epidermal flaws she may have had. Through the foundation's ultra-lightweight, yet full-coverage, formula, and 16 hour wear time, the foundation's ad campaign encourages wearers to #takethepower (Giorgio Armani Beauty 2016, Youtube 2017).

Weapons for What Purpose?

Whether epidermal enhancers are meant to nurture one's warrior-like ability to remain stable in spite of chaos, or designed to look like miniature weapons, or even accorded with the ability to transform bodies into weapons, a moment to ponder why is necessary. When discussing the weaponization of cosmetics and skincare with a colleague, he posed a very good question. "If these products are in fact treated as though they are weapons, marketed, and understood as weapons, then who or what are they being used against?"

The Environment

An Elizabeth Arden ad (Figure 29) run in October 2013's issue of *Allure Magazine* stated "did you know that 80% of aging is caused by exposure to UV light, pollution and smoke?" (Allure October 2013). Highlighting two serums from their Prevage line, both the Anti-Aging Daily Serum and the Anti-Aging + Intensive Repair Daily Serum offer correction to existing damage and protection against future environmental damage. In following a similar formula, Origins also seeks to correct and protect against environmental stressors. An ad (Figure 30) for a CC Cream, a light coverage foundation with skincare benefits that stands for "complexion corrector", claims to "neutralize skin damage effects of city smog and pollution" (Allure January 2014). Many companies and skincare specialists routinely point to pollution and UV rays as primary reasons for premature aging, indicating these environmental aggressors should be avoided and guarded against. While shopping for sun protection of my own, I was recommended Dior's "One Essential City Defense," by a Sephora employee. As is customary for samples at Sephora, an employee packaged a small amount of the product in a plastic container along with a printed description (Figure 31) of the product. In the summary of the product, printed from Sephora's digital bank of product descriptions known as their "Skincare IQ," the product was described as "an invisible revolutionary shield that offers unequaled skin protection against toxins." These "toxins" are further defined as both pollution and UVA/UVB rays. Furthermore, these toxins are identified most commonly as harmful not because they can lead to illnesses like skin cancer and lung afflictions, but rather because they can cause premature aging. An Instagram post (Figure 32) published by Tata Harper, a skincare company dedicated to "100% natural and non-toxic ingredients 100% of the time" (Tata Harper Skincare 2016), touches on how to best guard against the effects of such toxins. Tata Harper surmises that "combating the effects of environmental pollution is an important strategy for healthy, beautiful skin," and that

deep-cleaning the skin is the suggested method of combat (Instagram February 2016). As is often the case with skincare products geared towards environmental prevention, both defensive protection and offensive combat are described as essential when seeking epidermal victory.

Self-Doubt

Should doubt ever disrupt one's sense of self-love, both cosmetics and skincare are advised as tools that thwart off insecurities and nurture confidence. Not only can both products enhance the appearance of one's skin, but the sheer process of using and applying these products has become understood as beneficial to one's psyche as well. Australian skincare, hair care, and body care company Aesop, emphasizes the supposed transformative power of the ritual of skincare. Known in part for their dedication to the arts, one of their locations in Melbourne displayed an installation that "celebrate[s] skin's complex, transitory and individualized nature, and dramatizes and practices of maintenance, repair and fortification" (Aesop 2016). As described in an Instagram post (Figure 33, Figure 34 & Figure 35), the purpose of "Derma" was to "highlight the importance of rituals that nurture skin and self" (Instagram May 2016). The logic employed here is that to take time to nurture the skin is to take time to nurture the self. To relate this to Lawrence's interconnected argument, the relationship can be flipped as well. Nurturing the self can also be understood as taking steps to improve the skin.

Putting in place self-care regiments are also understood as fostering overall self-care, and therefore confidence. Skincare authority Caroline Hirons, who attained her title through the success of her blog, shared an Instagram post (Figure 36) of a makeup bag with the pseudo commandment "love thy lipstick love thy self" (Instagram January 2016) written. Intended as a witty offshoot of one of the two most important commandments according to Mark, "thou shall love thy neighbour as thyself" (Mark 12:31). The original commandment encourages followers

to love and treat others, especially those closest in proximity, as one would love and treat him/herself. Caroline Hirons' quote on the other hand, indicates that if one loves the way they look, or have caused themselves to look by ways of lipstick, one will be better positioned to feel love for him/herself.

In agreement with this notion, drugstore cosmetics company Revlon launched their Love Test campaign in the fall of 2015. The aim of the campaign (Figure 37) was to promote beauty rituals as an effective means of improving one's love life. In a Youtube commercial for the #Lovetest campaign, couples from various age groups, and in their respective relationships for various lengths of time, were interviewed as part of a study. Separated from one another, each individual was asked a series of questions. When asked about the female counterpart's insecurities, both she and her male partner, save for one lesbian couple, attested to her deep-rooted self-doubts, be they regarding her personality or appearance. The couples were sent home with a daily task to complete over the course of the next week. On Revlon's website, a more detailed list of instructions (Figure 38) are provided, encouraging anyone to participate as well. In an attempt to foster an appreciation for themselves, women are instructed by Revlon to partake in a sensorial experience for a few moments each day. The beauty ritual prescribed by Revlon includes applying fragrance, applying eye makeup, savouring a mint or a chocolate, applying a lip colour, taking a slow, deep breath, and finally looking in the mirror and smiling at one's reflection. The instructions encourage the observer to "experiment by trying the ritual at different times of the day, rearranging the steps—and, of course, trying new looks!" (Revlon Instructions).

In the Youtube commercial, the couples are invited back to discuss their week. While being interviewed, unbeknown to the women, each male counterpart, and the one female

counterpart, listened in on his/hers partner's responses. A transformation post beauty ritual is apparent immediately. Both the men and women appear more refined. There is a greater effort in their wardrobe choices, hair is coiffed, and many of the women appear to be wearing bolder cosmetics. It is unknown whether Revlon instructed the couples to put more effort into their appearances during their second meeting, or if this was an actual effect of the ritual. When asked if they felt differently since incorporating the beauty ritual into their daily lives, the responses were unanimously positive. One woman claimed the ritual caused her to feel more empowered. Another expressed how the ritual granted her permission to take time for herself. On all accounts, the daily pause for self-appreciation caused them to feel better about themselves and therefore more open to giving and receiving love in their relationships. On Revlon's website, the results (Figure 39) from the study indicated that female participants allegedly found a new appreciation for applying cosmetics and the augmentation to their appearances. According to one Revlon beauty ritual participant, "putting on makeup was just something I did… now, I actually enjoy stopping and looking at myself" (Revlon Results). According to Revlon's findings, partners supposedly noticed an elevation in their significant others' appearance, and most notably, their confidence and willingness to flirt and be romantic. In this way, Revlon highlights the supposed confidence endowing abilities of cosmetics, said to lead to a greater appreciation of oneself, and presumably an improved love life.

Not to be confused with vanity or selfishness, a quote by Parker Palmer published (Figure 40) by Lawrence on Facebook, denounces any selfishness in the act of self-care. The quote claims "self-care is never a selfish act—it is simply good stewardship of the only gift I have, the gift I was put on earth to offer others. Anytime we can listen to true self and give it the care it requires, we do it not only for ourselves, but for the many others whose lives we touch"

(Facebook February 2016). Therefore, according to the sentiment of the quote, moments, rituals, or practices of self-care are not only beneficial to the primary receiver, but also to the secondary receivers, those affected by the primary. Although the vanity of self-care can probably never be totally eliminated, introducing humanity to vanity reduces it and banishes feelings of guilt.

Censure of Others

During a phone conversation with Chloe, an informant who studies Political Science at University of Toronto, we discussed her uses of cosmetics. Chloe described cosmetics as a reliable augmentation to her appearance. It could be relied on when she felt as though she was "looking a little rough," or even in situations when a polished complexion could save her from unwelcomed comments, namely from her family members, "because they tend to comment." To better explain the nature of these comments, she used her sister's former struggle with acne as an example. "My sister used to have pretty severe acne, and my whole family made it into a 'thing.' They would suggest things like 'why don't you go on Proactive? Why don't you do this, why don't you do that?'" While Chloe insisted her family's comments were intended to be constructive and a means for self-improvement, she and her sister, whose acne has subsided but still struggles with hyperpigmented acne scarring, could rely on the flawless barrier makeup provided to repel all comments or criticisms.

Even in instances outside her family, Chloe described makeup as her "body armour," bringing her a sense of protection in "situations that may end in an argument or where [she may need] to assert [herself]." Unlike going to the grocery store, an instance where Chloe did not mind being barefaced, "going somewhere where [she] may have to argue or negotiate with someone, like [attending a] student government [meeting], participating in class, or [meeting] one of [her] advisors," gave her reason to wear a full face of makeup. During confrontational,

and potentially combative moments, Chloe's made-up face granted her a sense of confidence in her appearance, and therefore confidence in herself. "[Wearing makeup] makes the situation less stressful for me because [I feel as though] I can say more without fearing the other party will attack my appearance as a means of diverting from the conversation." Although she described herself as "confident in what [she] has to say anyways," and she admitted the chances of someone outside her family criticizing her appearance are very low, nevertheless, donning cosmetics provided her with "a sense of knowing that nothing can be picked on, and that there are no gaps or cracks [in both her cosmetic] foundation [and perspective.]

When discussing how she felt barefaced in comparison to fully done-up, Barbara's explanation paralleled that of Chloe's. Barbara too expressed her reluctance to interact with others when stepping out without makeup on. "I usually only go out without makeup on when I'm running errands or seeing family. I would never go to school without makeup on, and I would absolutely never go to work without makeup on." Barbara described her made-up face as giving her the confidence to talk to people and hold eye contact. "When I don't have makeup on, I don't want to talk to people, I'm not feeling my most "on," so my interactions are minimal." Barbara went on to describe her made-up and bare faces as a public and private face, although she specified her bare face "is not totally private, it's not as if I'm a werewolf who can't be seen once my transformation takes place. I still go out. My bare face is just not the public face I wish to have." In these instances, both Chloe and Barbara emphasize the confidence, and therefore sense of ease and security, that cosmetics provide them.

Women's Oppression

In Naomi Wolf's *The Beauty Myth*, she offers her response as to what these products are guarding against. According to Wolf, these products offer women the protection they have been

denied by society. Since gaining a place in the public sphere, and "releas[ing] themselves from the feminine mystique of domesticity" (Wolf 1991:10), Wolf argues female beauty has become the new means through which women's advancements have been curtailed, and women's behaviours controlled. Wolf describes a "the beauty myth", in which women are assigned a currency of beauty, and placed in a vertical hierarchy dictated by an imposed physical standard (Wolf 1991:12). Competing in this way effectively "control[s] women whom second wave feminism would have otherwise made relatively uncontrollable" (Wolf 1991:12). Furthermore, by reducing "women [to] mere "beauties" […] men's culture can be kept male (Wolf 1991:59), and women can "remain vulnerable to outside approval" (Wolf 1991:13). In short, Wolf argues that women's beauty falls under greater scrutiny then that of men's because theirs is more valuable. And an effective way of attaining beauty, or at least said to be effective, is through a purchasable means. Wolf insists that on the bottles of skincare products and in their ads "each word strikes a nerve of legitimate female fear that has nothing to do with aging or with the qualities of the product" (Wolf 1991:115). In conjuring the image of a protective shield or an essential barrier, Wolf argues these metaphorically serve "the successful, controlled working woman [against] sexual violence, street harassment and a hostile workplace" (Wolf 1991:115). Thus Wolf argues that skincare companies are really selling "the protection that women no longer get from men and do not yet get from the law" (Wolf 1991:116). The only way out "of an expensive belief system" is to understand that the skincare claims are not about the product, but rather they provide "an impressively accurate portrait of the hidden demons of our time" (Wolf 1991:117).

Conclusion

With several possibilities put forward, the principle question still remains unanswered: against what or whom are these products intended? All categories I have put forward: the environment, self-doubt, the censure of others, and the societal oppression of women, all point to a common denominator. Among women, power is found in altering one's skin, and gaining control, or at least the impression of control, over the epidermis. In agreement with Wolf's argument, women's appearances are held to a higher degree then that of men's. The smoothness, radiance and youthfulness of women's skin is examined under closer inspection. Ageing is especially concerning to women because there is less room, and greater consequences, for older women. According to Wolf, "the decades from forty to sixty—when many men but certainly most women are at the height of their powers—are cast as men's peak and women's decline" (Wolf 1991:230). Wolf accurately emphasize the concerning aspect of ageing not as growing older itself, but how one is treated or discarded, occurring at a younger age among women than men. If the roles were reversed, and "men's main function were decorative and male adolescence were seen as the peak of male value, a 'distinguished' middle-aged man would look shockingly flawed" (Wolf 1991:93). Thus, gaining control over the epidermis, despite environmental stressors, is of more value to women because it appeases external and internal censures. Contrarily, external censures can also be aggravated. As was the case during the shift in women's fashions at the beginning of the Edwardian period, where women began painting their faces as a means of communicating their desire to take control of their sexualities and prospects. Similarly, *Vogue*'s June 2016 (Figure 41 & Figure 42) issue noted a similar occurrence "in the 1990s, when riot grrrls were breaking onto the punk scene and a new generation of women were redefining feminism, dark lipstick was shorthand for power. Previously shunned by the second wave as an invention of the patriarchy, statement lipstick was reclaimed as a means of rebellion and self-definition" (Vogue June 2016). The article

goes on to claim that dark lips paired with fresh, clean looking skin are making a political comeback "for a new crowd of fiercely independent women" (Vogue June 2016). Whether or not one is willing to take *Vogue*'s claims regarding feminism and women's independence seriously, what should be noted is their emphasis of the connection between politics and cosmetics. As a major authority on do's and don'ts of fashion, they have dedicated a section of their manual to not only explain *how* to achieve a look, but also *why* a look is done and what messages it communicates.

In short, weaponizing both skincare and cosmetics is a result of the importance placed on women's beauty. Women stand to both loose and gain control by controlling their skins. Wolf is correct to identify the sheer attention paid to women's appearances as unfair and oppressive. However, she does not note the ways women have subverted oppression through this oppressive mechanism.

Beauty a Duty

The Sin of Ugliness: Female Virtues and Mental Health

As makeup became more widely used, and its egalitarian potentials became better known, makeup became conveyed as a necessity not to be remised. In 1890 Madame Maude Yale, a businesswoman who started her own toilet goods company in New York, traveled the country "giving public lecture to women on 'The Religion of Beauty, the Sin of Ugliness'" (Peiss 1998:85). Madame Yale opposed Victorian logic that considered self-beautifying to be women's weakness. Rather, she proclaimed beauty as women's duty. Madame Yale shared with her audiences her view that women could be divided into two camps, those with good complexions

and those without, and that beautifying should be practiced by all (Peiss 1998:86). The increased democratic accessibility of beauty, in the form of products, intensified Madame Yale's message. With mass-marketing of makeup and skin care, all women were believed attractively capable, the potential needed only the tending of consumable commodities. Thereby, women with poor complexions, or lacking in beauty, who did not invest their time and money into beautifying, had only themselves to blame. A quote (Figure 43) by Helena Rubinstein insists "there are no ugly women, only lazy ones." The sin of ugliness became especially sinful when an individual did nothing to correct their appearance. A person with severe acne can inspire compassion and sympathy in others. However, a person who does nothing to battle their acne, as acne is often marketed as something that requires aggressive combat, often inspire apathy and sometimes even antipathy. Thus, the sin of ugliness became equated with the sin of abstaining from beauty aides.

By the turn of the century, notions of beauty as women's obligation became secured to a female identity. "Putting on a face" and the incorporation of cosmetics into daily routines, became quintessentially female. What may have started as a promotion of freedom of individual expression quickly resulted in "binding feminine identity to manufactured beauty, self-portrayal to acts of consumption" (Peiss 1998:135). As a result, one's appearance had become a supposed indication of a healthy adherence to a feminine identity, and therefore evidence of a psychologically fit woman. As pointed out by Jablonski, it had long been true of several different societies that one's skin was believed to indicate one's health (Jablonski 2006:121), this became expanded to include one's mental health as well. Ironically, "what had been once seen as women's vices—vanity, deceit, desire—were now signs of a 'normal mind'" (Peiss 1998:158). By the 1930s a therapeutic language had been incorporated into cosmetic promotions. "It was not simply that makeup could 'make us look and feel more self-possessed, poised, and efficient,' as

one beauty editor put it. Rather, women's mental health and feminine development depended on continually embracing new looks and beauty products" (Peiss 1998:155). Those in the field of psychology weighed in as well. Peiss quotes one psychiatrist who deemed those "conscious of their poor appearance" as suffering from an inferiority complex (Peiss 1998:156). According to industry spokesman Everett McDonough, makeup was a viable solution to such cases. For "many a neurotic case has been cured with the deft application of a lipstick" (Peiss 1998:156).

Thus a made-up woman had become understood as psychologically capable because her desire to improve her appearance indicated a proper adherence to her gender, a subscription to the cultural view of the body as something in need of continual upkeep, as well as an aptitude for introspection and self-development. It is reasoned that time spent taking care of one's appearance and making oneself "presentable" in the morning, by use of cosmetics and skincare among women, indicates a sound and capable mind. Furthermore, the skin is expected to reflect this type of sanity-driven maintenance. An Instagram post (Figure 44 & Figure 45) by ClearMe Skin, a company dedicated to selling a single facemask, emphasizes that "healthy, glowing skin reflects overall wellness. Take care of the skin you're in with an 100% natural and organic face mask to help clear breakouts, reduce redness and refine the look of pores!" (Instagram April 2015). A story shared by Kate Somerville indicates that not only can maintained skin indicate a sound mind, but it can help to foster one. One morning "there I was, lying in bed, anticipating a really hectic day with my seven-year-old. I'd promised to take him skiing, and I was worried. My son skis fast, and I'm nervous with him sometimes. I didn't think I could keep up; plus as a mom, I wanted to keep him safe. Not to mention the fact that I was exhausted and wanted to just lie in bed. So I said to myself, *Katie, let's find a way to relax and enjoy this time.* I decided to take a long luxurious shower; give myself a hair mask; and put on some makeup before we hit the

slopes. Just doing those little things made me much more patient with my son. I was able to nurture him because I had taken the time to nurture myself" (Somerville 2010:31). Somerville goes on to invite her readers to probe into their own feelings towards their upkeep. These feelings, she determines, are indicative clues of one's happiness and mental state. "Are you keeping up with your personal grooming? Do you take care of your skin, hair, and nails? Do you take pride in putting yourself together, or does it feel like a chore? If the answer to any of these questions is no, you might want to do a little self-examination and see what's *really* going on in your life" (Somerville 2010:32). She surmises that a lack of interest in one's appearance is an indication of a larger problem, one that should be identified and rectified. Interestingly, Barbara recounted a seemingly contrary phenomenon in her own behavior. "Whenever my life is a mess, I'm stressed with school, going through exams, lacking sleep, these are the times when I'll take more time doing my makeup. I'll make sure my foundation is extra flawless, or my eye shadow is extra blended. That way, I can at least look pulled together, even though I'm really not. And when I look in the mirror at some point during the day, it'll lift my spirits a little and make me feel happy to know that the outside of me looks polished even though I'm a mess on the inside." As opposed to Somerville, Barbara's maintenance routine becomes exaggerated, rather than minimized, when parts of her life are in disarray. However, I argue that this expands Somerville's theory rather than disproves it. Perhaps any kind of extreme change in one's bodily upkeep can be understood as an indication of psychological upheaval. By either loosening or tightening the slack of one's self-care, one is either yielding to mental distress, or compensating for it. The take-away message here is that self-care is perceived as an indication of good mental health, or a means of working towards it. This was true of Mario Lopez's fitness routine, by which he employed for "sanity, not vanity," he confessed to magazine *Latin Trends*. As was

previously mentioned, there is overlap between the symbolism of looking fit and looking radiant. There are obvious vanity reasons for molding one's body to match these standards, but because they are understood as synonymous with health, there are believed physical and mental health benefits to self-care as well. Furthermore, these benefits are imagined, in the cases of Somerville and Barbara, to be cultivated through self-care regiments.

In addition, a well-groomed woman also became perceived as psychologically capable because her dedication to self-maintenance was thought of as rescuing her from being unattractive, a situation thought to leave a negative impact on one's self-esteem. According to Peiss, due to poor treatment received by those deemed less attractive, or those with compromised complexions, it is assumed that the effects of mistreatments must be apparent in the individual's psyche. Beauty expert Frances Ingram asserted that "when a woman has a bad complexion, people notice it immediately, and they have to get past it before they really like that person" (Peiss 1998:156). As consequence "the dullness of your complexion may have reacted on your subconscious in such a way that your confidence in yourself has become impaired" (Peiss 1998:156), she reasoned with one woman. Perhaps a rehabilitation of humourism, cosmetic donning signaled a mentally sound woman, who tended to her external appearances, consequently indicating a sense of self-worth, confidence, and pride.

The common theme amongst the reasons for being perceived as psychologically fit, which I have touched on, boils down to confidence. A woman dons her face with makeup and treats her skin with skincare because she takes pride in her appearance. When she no longer takes pride, there is an apparent problem. In a Ted Talk titled "In My Chair," Eva DeVirgilis describes the temporary yet powerful transformation she witnesses among clients throughout her career as a makeup artist. According to DeVirgilis, due to the inflated standard of beauty that is "porn and

fashion and photoshop just all mixed up into one" (6:40), the majority of women are left feeling as though they don't measure up. Makeup, according to DeVirgilis, is the tool through which she helps her clients recognize and appreciate their beauty. While she confesses that as a makeup artist she is "adept with the tools to very easily manipulate and enhance biological cues of attraction" (3:35) such as "symmetry, colour, and light that please our primordial senses" (3:25), cosmetic enhancement is not the only component to her job. The other, more oral component of the cosmetic transformations DeVirgilis performs, mimics the adroit task of makeup application. While defining and enhancing the eyes, or the lips, or the skin, the makeup artist brings these desirable features to the client's attention. As an aspiring actor, DeVirgilis acts out her interaction with her clients. "I say but Matir, look at your gorgeous golden skin! Here, hold the mirror, watch what I'm doing. Look at these perfect almond eyes. These lips! My God, in my next life I want these lips. Your smile just lit up this room!" (5:16) Playing the role of Matir, DeVirgilis demonstrates that Matir is no longer solely focused on her round, fat face, that could never be made pretty (5:00). Instead she smiles at herself in the mirror and agrees. In these moments, DeVirgilis explains to her audience that makeup is only partially the reason her clients "leap up out of [their] chair with this new skip in their step, […] look in the mirror and actually smile at [themselves] (4:32). Makeup, DeVirgilis admits, does play a real role in making a woman feel more attractive and thus more confident, most likely because she feels as though she is a step closer to the unattainable beauty standards the Ted Talk refers to. But makeup is what DeVirgilis identifies as her "therapy puppet, to help a woman open up about how she's feeling and express what her concerns are, so I can address them" (4:17). The real transformation described in this Ted Talk is made possible through the collaboration of both cosmetic and oral attention. DeVirgilis addresses her clients' qualms by emphasizing or diminishing through

cosmetics, and teaching acceptance and even appreciation through her own appreciation of these women's "issues."

By "treading in the deep end of a shallow profession" (4:00), DeVirgilis demonstrates that makeup can be used to temporarily cultivate confidence. Even in the absence is DeVirgilis' praise, a woman who is wearing makeup, has manipulated her face to her own liking, or a way that beauty authorities have informed her should be to her liking. She has produced something that is a step closer to pleasing, and she can draw confidence from this. In turn, she has acquired a weapon against her failure to meet unattainable standards, and at least self-appreciation if not love. In short, my argument is that confidence propels a woman to take pride in her appearance and minimizes the effects of failing to meet beauty standards. It is perhaps this senseless treadmill walk away from feelings of not being good enough towards contentment with one's appearance that signals a psychologically fit woman. Although she will likely never arrive at the place she is working towards, finding herself truly beautiful, with or without makeup, her visible desire to get to this place, through the use of cosmetics, has become an indication of a mentally sound woman.

During World War II, the link between makeup and one's psychological well-being fell under scrutiny. Due to the difficulties that resulted from the war, "some questioned whether women should continue to seek 'glamour as usual' in a world bent on destruction" (Peiss 1998:239). Lipstick, perhaps in part due to its conspicuousness, became especially criticized. Ultimately, popular opinion determined that "American women's brave response to the national crisis was not diminished but enhanced by reasonable attention to appearance" as was stated by "a red-blooded, red-lipped housewife" (Peiss 1998:239). Cosmetic company Tangee, ran adverts during the war encouraging women to continue to use lipstick, Tangee's lipsticks in particular, as

it "enabled women to 'do' as a man and 'appear' as a woman" (Peiss 1998:240). Peiss notes that "lipstick helped women to put on a brave face, 'conceal heartbreak and sorrow,' and gain 'self-confidence when it's badly needed" (Peiss 1998:240). Tangee's adverts even boldly "equated the protection of freedom and democracy with the protection of beauty. Lipstick symbolized 'the precious right of women to be feminine and lovely—under any circumstances,' and this. Tangee, concluded, was 'one of the reasons why we are fighting.'" (Peiss 1998:240). The British Museum's Instagram (Figure 46 & Figure 47) echoed a similar sentiment with a photo of a female Air Raid Precautions staff applying her lipstick between emergency calls. The lengthy caption states that while it was "unfashionable to wear clothes that were obviously showy, women were frequently implored not to let 'standards' slip too far. There was genuine concern that a lack of interest in personal appearance could be a sign of low morale, which could have a detrimental impact on the war effort" (Instagram August 2015). The post continues to affirm that the concern for women's morale greatly impacted the decision to continue manufacturing cosmetics, albeit in reduced quantities (Instagram August 2015). Makeup was never rationed, but concessions needed to be made. Eldridge notes "through necessity, packaging was completely stripped back to the basics […] all brands from Chanel to Coty resorted to plain cardboard packaging. Puffs were also in short supply—one Bourjois powder came with a note inside explaining that there was no puff due to wartime restrictions" (Eldridge 2015:182).

Wolf notes that both advertisers and magazine articles also focused on the requirement of cosmetics. They communicated to women their duty to "keep their FQ (Feminine Quotient) high" (Wolf 1991:63). Wolf concludes that this was done to ensure women, realizing themselves capable of men's work, "did not liberate themselves out of their interest in women's magazines," the highest authority on women's fashions of the day (Wolf 1991:63). While Wolf makes a fair

point, the uplifting psychological capabilities of cosmetics should not be minimized nor ignored. Without a doubt women became governed by an increased expectation to enhance their features with cosmetics. And the usage of cosmetics became policed by trends, fashions, and faux pas, set by advertisers and beauty experts. These drastically limited the initial freedoms and self-expression possibilities. "Coloring the eyelids and beading lashes were fun in the evening but bad taste in daylight; acceptable for adults but not for girls under eighteen; lovely on the dance floor but not in the office" (Peiss 1998:155). A rigid consideration of the time of day continued to dictate and sway a woman's cosmetic decisions. Likewise, makeup fashions and seasonal trends assisted the trafficking of makeup. Certain hues were, and continue to be, reserved for certain seasons, and trends, dictated largely through magazines, were to be complied with. This kept women shackled to a prescribed form of cosmetic application, and according to Wolf, secured the focus onto women's appearances, rather than their professional performances. However, the flip side of this argument, is that cosmetic and skincare usages reinforced women's confidence and belief in themselves. The true psychological power of cosmetics is not only that it can make a woman look capable, but that by looking this way she can begin to manifest it in her demeanor as well.

The Cosmetic Prerequisite

Once a solidified and necessitated step in women's routines, makeup became identified as an oppressive practice for the first time. Although cosmetics had formally signaled women's freedoms and rights, by the 1960s feminists "mounted an attack on beauty ideals and the beauty industry" (Peiss 1998:260). "Combining an assault on consumer culture with a new emphasis on patriarchy, these critics charged that male-dominated capitalist economy manipulated female desires and anxieties in ways that served men's personal and political control of women" (Peiss

1998:261). Furthermore, feminists chastised cosmetics for becoming part and parcel of a feminine identity. By the 1930s beauty had not only become a duty, but for some a burden. A woman who did not allot time and money to the practice jeopardized her chances of social ascension, recognition as a mentally capable individual, and potentially compromised her own self-worth.

By the 1970s the feminists' rebuke of commercialized beauty inspired "many young women […] to use makeup more sparingly, with some giving it up entirely" (Peiss 1998:261). Incredibly, this did not impact the cosmetic industries. "Responding selectively to elements of the feminist and countercultural critique, manufacturers ingeniously repackaged products and redefined advertising to address the increasingly politicized understanding of appearance" (Peiss 1998:261). Peiss indicates that before long, the "liberated" woman became a beauty type (Peiss 1998:261). Additionally, as was the case with skincare during the Victorian period, skincare was successful in evading this reevaluation. By emphasizing a scientific element in skincare, it was communicated "as a necessary grooming practice [and] deflected criticism that cosmetics objectified and demeaned women" (Peiss 1998:262). Peiss gives the example of skincare and cosmetic brand Clinique. Launching a skincare line in neutral green packaging, Clinique instructed users to cleanse, tone and moisturize twice a day; portraying skin care as a hygienic practice, much like brushing one's teeth. By creating a regime detached from beauty, glamour, and sexuality, Peiss asserts "Clinique [as] the cosmetic line of choice for many professional women and feminists" (Peiss 1998:262). Remarkably, even those critical of the oppressiveness of cosmetics often failed to escape the grip of these industries.

However, cosmetics were not fortunate in the same way skincare was. Likely due to their sexual association, coupled with the instant results of cosmetics, they could not be categorized as

medicinal nor associated with hygiene in the same way as skincare. Thus the regular usages of skincare, perhaps even reliance on its effects, are not as easily identified as troubling or fanatical in the same way cosmetics are.

One Buzzfeed article expressed a single-mother's recognition and confession of her dependence on cosmetics. "How Motherhood Changed My Beauty" describes Stacia L. Brown's first year after giving birth as the year she "officially needed [makeup]. Dark crescents had settled under my eyes like sinister little grins." Year after year, she noticed her "slavish devotion to makeup" deepen. However, to offset her growing dependence she was "willfully disorganized about [her] cosmetics." Her "concealer, pressed power, liner pencils, tricolor eyeshadow," were all kept in a "faded plastic Macy's bag […] either under the front passenger seat of [her] car or at the bottom of [her] oversized handbag." Brown employed a similar nonchalance towards her application of these products. "They're to be applied at red lights or hastily slapped on without the continuous aid of a mirror." Much to her dismay, Brown found her efforts to be in vain. Motherhood had taken its toll on her previously youthful appearance, and she rarely left the house without the assistance of cosmetics anymore. Prior to motherhood, when she had been frequently "mistaken for a student on the college campuses where [she] taught," her relationship with cosmetics was very different. Then, makeup was fun, sparingly applied day-to-day, and only really done-up for special occasions. Brown recounts her first of these "special occasions," her prom night, which commenced her understanding that "makeup transmogrified." According to Brown, in her younger years, when she didn't "need makeup," cosmetics "could make wiggle room between your workaday self and whomever the mineral-powdered person was staring back at you. In that space, you were a changeling."

Brown's account of mothering alone was "a double-edge sword, sloughing off [her]

vanity, but also wounding [her] sense of [her] own beauty." For a while, unintentionally doing away with beauty conventions, due to the more pressing demands of motherhood, felt "empowering and deeply feminist." However, the "pitying glances at the dried milk and drool on the maternity shirts" became apparent. Acquaintances began to show concern asking "But how are *you*?" In an effort to counter the effects of motherhood that had left her feeling invisible, her usage of cosmetics changed. Makeup, Brown confessed, "could give [her] deliberate control over how [she] wanted to present [her]self to the world." She "no longer used it frivolously or to create a mysterious air." Makeup had become both serious and necessary, "a fort under which [she] could take cover." Without her "cosmetic armor," Brown admits her uncertain identity. "I am definitely not coy, seductive, or brazen," as she is with cosmetics. Without them, as she discovered after misplacing her Macy's bag and arriving to her daughter's pre-K barefaced, "I'm the woman rushing through pleasantries at the drop-off zone, eyes trained on her feet hoping no one notices what's off about her today. I'm the person plotting where in the house to look first for her misplaced concealer."

As Stacia L. Brown's experience demonstrates, the joviality of cosmetics becomes threatened once the wearer grows dependent on their effects. And it is this form of reliance that draws criticism from feminists like Wolf. She argues "the real problem with cosmetics exists only when women feel invisible or inadequate without them" (Wolf 1991:273). Furthermore, Wolf identifies this issue as derived from a larger problem: women's identities are bound to their appearances. Only "when women are granted rock-solid identities" will "cosmetics and disguises be lighthearted and fun" (Wolf 1991:273). However, Wolf's reproach of cosmetics does not divert her attention away from skincare. Under her assumption that skincare does "not actually do anything" (Wolf 1991:109), she berates it for being sold to quell their customers' feelings of

guilt, guilt the industry is responsible for creating. Wolf reasons "if she ages without the cream, she will be told that she has brought it on herself, from her unwillingness to make the proper financial sacrifice. If she does buy the cream—and ages, which she is bound to anyway—at least she will know how much she has paid to ward off the guilt" (Wolf 1991:121). For both skincare and cosmetics, regardless of Wolf's acknowledgement that "face colors […] at least do what they are meant to" (Wolf 1991:121), Wolf emphasizes their oppressiveness lies in their requirement.

While discussing Tanya's cosmetic and skincare usages, she referred to a period in which she wasn't happy with her skin. She explained that her skin had begun to scar excessively, even beyond what she described as normal pigmentation issues among darker skins. During her epidermal dissatisfaction, she'd gotten accustomed to wearing makeup nearly every day, "even to go to yoga." She began feeling uncomfortable towards her growing dependence on cosmetics, so she decided to stop wearing it altogether. Her reasoning was that she needed to become comfortable with her skin in order to be happy with her skin. Her ultimate goal, she confessed, was "to get to a place where [she] can sometimes wear foundation, or conceal spots, fix the brightness under her eyes" without relying on this kind of concealment to leave her house. "I know in the past, when I would get a breakout I would be like 'Oh no worries, I got it, I'll just cover it up, it's not a big deal.' But I don't want to keep thinking that and taking my skin for granted." More importantly, Tanya linked her growing dependence on cosmetics, and unease stepping out barefaced, as an unhealthy performance for the sake of others. "I'm not saying this about people who wear makeup, and I'm not saying this about the makeup industry in general, all I'm saying is that when *I* covered a zit, it was more because I was worried about what other people thought about me. And I didn't want to live like that." Careful not to place any blame on

makeup itself, or those who promote its benefits, Tanya insisted that makeup had this negative affect on *her*, and this realization led her to temporarily do away with cosmetics. This, she insisted, was a form of tough yet necessary "character development." Rather than agonize over the thought of people comparing her bare face to made-up photos of her online, she came to reason that with and without makeup, it was still the same face, and she should be comfortable putting her "naked face forward."

As was the case with the criticisms towards cosmetics during the 1960s, criticisms regarding dependence on makeup will likely not hurt the cosmetic industry either. Cosmetic brands are responding and adapting swiftly and ingeniously. In order to promote L'Oréal's updated release of their foundation True Match, content creators, philanthropists and other women in the public eye were part of their #yourstruly campaign. Not only did the packaging receive an upgrade, but the shade range was expanded as well. The point of the campaign was to communicate the foundation's diversity and incorporation of all skin colours. 23 women were selected to represent the 23 shades of the foundation. In her commercial, Television presenter Sarah-Jane Crawford, describes her relationship with foundation as "celebratory of her skin" (0:10). Her enjoyment of both wearing makeup and not, allows her to use foundation as "a bonus and something [she] can enjoy rather than a *need* to wear it" (0:21). Regardless of whether or not buyers end up employing foundation similarly, L'Oréal incorporates a relaxed, non-compulsory view of skin enhancements as part of its ethos. Because they have featured Sarah-Jane Crawford speaking about an ideal usage of cosmetics, one which feminists like Wolf condone, L'Oréal has integrated a feminist-approved message into their True Match foundation. The intended result is a foundation that buyers aware of the criticisms of cosmetics can purchase confidently. By shifting beauty from a duty to a pleasure, an expression, or a form of empowerment, marketers

are ensuring cosmetics remain in the realm of acceptability.

Makeup as an Extension of the Self

A Natural Artifice

Although the link between makeup and immorality eventually gave way, the idea of makeup as artificial and deceptive proved harder to shake. In order to break free from ideas of concealment, cosmetic brands continue to steer contemporary users towards more "natural applications" through continual releases of the newest and most traceless foundations and concealers. Bases that look like skin and feel weightless continue to be communicated as important requirements for superior foundations. Likewise, foundations that impart cakey finishes, or are apparent, are advised against. A believable, skin-like base is communicated as crucial to successful makeup application. Ideally, one's foundation should "diffuse the line between makeup and skin" (Sephora June 2016 Figure 54), as to ensure artificiality is minimized. If this kind of "diffusion" is done correctly, one's foundation adheres to its supposed intention.

However indistinguishable, Peiss argues that in order to make cosmetics truly invisible "involved not just creating a natural look, but training the eye to perceive makeup as a natural feature of women's faces" (Peiss 1998:152). The common discolouration of the skin, where some areas may appear redder than others, has become replaced by perfectly even skin. Therefore, makeup-free yet "good" and desirable skin has become understood as uniform in colour, which for many is only achievable through cosmetic aid. Similarly, Peiss indicates that lipstick proved an especially difficult cosmetic to naturalize. Lipstick, more so than other

cosmetic of the time, suggested a sexual assertiveness, thus it was deemed the most artificial daily cosmetic (Peiss 1998:152). Drawing on the advice of beauty editor Dorothy Cocks, who did not oppose "having your lip paste show, provided it shows an effort on your part to have it match the natural tone of your own coloring" (Peiss 1998:152). Many beauty authorities echoed Cocks' sentiment and "against the eye's perception, the industry [eventually] declared lipstick natural" (Peiss 1998:152). As the expectation for women's "natural" appearances became increasingly unfeasible, not only was a dependency on cosmetics cultivated, but looking natural "now required a box full of beauty devices: foundation or vanishing cream, powder, rouge, lipstick, and for some, eyebrow pencil, mascara and eye shadow." The normalization of a cosmetically beautified face is perhaps best summarized by Bareminerals' slogan "not seeing is believing" (Figure 48). If a foundation, or lipstick, or any other cosmetic, cannot be unmistakably identified, it stands a chance of appearing natural, and therefore believable.

The Persisting Artificiality of Cosmetics

Despite the careful guidance from makeup authorities, ever-improving base formulas, and retraining the eye to perceive light cosmetics as natural or even barefaced, the link between cosmetics and artifice continued, and still continues, to persist. It is typically non-users whom are generally—although not always—men, who attempt to reinforce the recognition of makeup as artificial and therefore deceitful. In 1925, a man by the name Marco B. wrote into the *Seattle Union Record*, pronouncing cosmetics a "method of seeking satisfaction…by falseness and deception" and "a confession of women's shallowness and incapacity" (Peiss 1998:180). Ninety years later, although the methods of transmitting this sentiment have changed, the fundamental message—female identity and appearance as contrasting—remains unchanged.

On social media sites that circulate pictures and posts, it is common to find dramatic

before-and-after photographs of women. One such post (Figure 55) on Instagram in April of 2016, shows the "before" picture of a woman with unblended contour and highlighting, exaggerated and somewhat inaccurately applied for the sake of comedy. This kind of dramatic shading and lightening style of makeup is typical among drag queens. Popularized among more mainstream users by Kim Kardashian and her makeup artist Mario Dedivanovic, the garish shapes of white and brown liquids and powders are blended or brushed away to reveal a chiseled and more defined appearance. The right-handed "after" of the post shows just that, an attractive woman with admirable makeup. The post reads "if you gotta go through all this to be a bad bitch, YOU UGLY FAM" (Instagram April 2016). The term "bad bitch" is derived from hip-hop and signifies a desirable kind of woman, one who is emotionally strong, self-reliant, intelligent, attractive, and well-dressed—often in a revealing manner. This kind of woman is the antithesis to a "basic bitch" denoting an airhead, or a shallow woman. The caption of the photo, written by Instagram user "samarophox" reads "The Devil is [a] Lie…after the sight of #lilkim I feel vanity is growing in strength while self-worth is diminishing at an extreme rate… #makeup #fakeup" (Instagram April 2016). The caption implies that looking like a "bad bitch," or a capable woman, holds greater importance than *being* a "bad bitch." Furthermore, "samarophox" criticizes the precedence of what one looks like, over who they are. As my thesis has attempted to make clear, the communicative abilities of cosmetic fashioning is a powerful tool. One can communicate who they are. A capable woman can non-verbally communicate this about herself through cosmetics. Similarly, a woman who wishes to be perceived as capable, when perhaps she is less so, can call on cosmetics to feign the characteristics of a "bad bitch." Effectively, using makeup to "fakeup" or produce an inaccurate identity.

Putting The Art in Artifice

In response to *Seattle Union Record's* article in 1925, Peiss indicates that "cosmetic-using women translated the sign of artifice into the language of artistry" (Peiss 1998:180). Women like Senga R. insisted that makeup application was a skill few innately possessed. "You can't sit down and just 'daub' it on" (Peiss 1998:180). Rather, she, and other cosmetic users, insisted that application required practice, dexterity, and an aesthetic sensibility. The emphasis of artistry in cosmetic application has held strong and continues to be a justifying antithesis to claims of artificiality today. Determined to redefine makeup as an artistic skill, François Nars (Figure 60) called on Andy Warhol's broad definition of art. According to Nars "Andy Warhol realized art could take any form. Putting on your makeup is a kind of self-portrait." Furthermore, the works of art in question, like many other contemporary works of art, are to be appreciated visually only.

A similar attempt to cultivate an appreciation for the artistry and skill that goes into cosmetic application can be found in the popular tag video "my boyfriend/husband does my makeup." Emerging as a challenge video on Youtube at the end of 2010, this themed video quickly became in vogue. The tag video featured "female uploaders invit[ing] male friends, usually their significant others, to apply their makeup on camera. These videos are commonly shared online for the sake of humor that arises from the male partner's inexperience in makeup application and the often unsatisfactory end result" (My Boyfriend Does My Makeup 2012). Besides humour, and an occasion to meet a beauty Youtuber's partner, the underlying goal of these videos is to confirm makeup as a honed artistic skill, as well as demonstrate the catastrophic results when an inexperienced user is expected to perform. By the end of their pitiful attempts, the men often announce their newfound appreciation and recognition of the creative work of those practiced in the art of cosmetics. Further emphasis of this point is found in Emily

Canham description of the joy in having applied her makeup well. In the L'Oréal commercial for their True Match foundation, the Youtuber confesses she "feels amazing" when "having a really good makeup day, but not necessarily just because [she] feel[s] like [she] look[s] good, but because [she's] done a skill, [she's] done her makeup, and it's like an accomplishment" (Youtube 0:29). While Canham indicates makeup artistry as a skill that is impossible to perform without the proper expertise, she also suggests there is an added dimension to makeup performance that is tied to one's pride and identity.

Makeup as Revealing

Since one's enhanced appearance is often achieved through one's own handiwork, it is therefore less of a stretch to understand the made-up face as an extension of the person them self. I argue that validating the artistry of the practice facilitates the understanding of one's made-up face as part of one's identity, even despite the fact that it washes off.

François Nars asserted "makeup can help you be yourself. It is not about making you become a different person—it's about making you look better." In a different quote (Figure 62) he insisted "makeup should never hide the complexion, it should reveal who you are" (Instagram March 2015). Nars' instructional quotes contest ideas of deceit and instead promote makeup as an enhancement of oneself. If applied correctly, Nars suggests makeup provides the opportunity to better align outer appearances with inner dispositions, causing one's true identity to be more widely communicated. In 2014 cosmetic company DermaBlend Professional began their "Camo Confession" campaign. Different content creators were selected to remove their makeup on camera, exposing their flaws, opening a discussion for their reasons for wearing makeup. Youtuber and volleyball coach Cheri Lindsay, removed her makeup to reveal her affliction with vitiligo, a skin pigment disorder. Rather than bare the probing questions and lingering looks,

Cheri Lindsay opted for "an alternative, something that [she] could just put on her face that can help people to look through the initial shock of 'oh okay half her face is white but she's a black girl'" (Youtube 2014 1:42). She describes her employment of foundation as enabling others to see "who [she is] as a person, mak[ing her] a little more approachable" (Youtube 2014 1:58). By revealing her flaws, Cheri Lindsay expresses her hope that others will be inspired to "put themselves out there" the same way she has. In revealing both her bare face and reasons for wearing, Dermablend's Camo Confessions challenge ideas of makeup as concealing, arguing that it can be revealing as well.

In L'Oréal's "Yours Truly" campaign, Katie Piper, television presenter, charity founder and survivor of a sulfuric acid attack, declares her love for foundation. Calling it her "desert island item" she admits, "if I couldn't have any other makeup, I just want my foundation" (Youtube 2016 0:40). The charity founder continues her discussion on foundation by denying that she uses the product to hide. Rather, Piper describes the cosmetic as "a piece of equipment [she] calls on to be [herself]" (Youtube 2016 0:50). An Instagram post (Figure 63) by Urban Decay reinforced the supposed link between self-fashioning and identity. The post reads "makeup is about self-expression. It's not about covering your flaws, but showing the world who you are" (Instagram January 2017). This is a common theme in widely circulated makeup posts; they deny makeup serves the purpose it is intended to serve, like covering imperfections. Rather, they emphasize the positive effects makeup has on one's confidence, state of mind, and/or identity presentation. Analyzing Urban Decay's post, it would be more accurate to argue that makeup does in fact cover flaws, however, its purpose is not so limited. By concealing said flaws, one is able to appear neutral as Barbara put it; distractions like acne or vitiligo are hidden, permitting one's identity to take center stage, in an otherwise competitive theatre. In another

video filmed for the Camo Confessions campaign, model, student, and Youtuber, Cassandra Bankson removed her makeup to reveal her struggle with acne. Bankson warns viewer against a common misconception. “We think that perfection exists, we think that in order to be successful we have to be a certain way. When in reality, in order to be successful and happy all we have to do is be ourselves” (Youtube March 2014 1:26). Makeup, she insists, has the ability to permit this definition of success. Rather than “use makeup to cover up, and hide who [she] was,” like Bankson admitted she used to, “now, [she] uses makeup to express herself, and to show the world who [she] truly [is]” (Youtube March 2015 1:45). It is reasonable to assume that neither the makeup, nor application techniques, were affected in Bankson’s shift from concealing to revealing. The change was her thought process and relationship with makeup. Rather than remain fearful of the moment when she might be spotted without makeup, acne completely exposed, the Youtuber “outs” herself. With this element of fear eliminated, Bankson is free to use makeup in an empowering way, to take charge of her identity, “standing out for who she is and not her acne” (Description Box).

Taking this argument one step further, not only can cosmetics present one’s true self, but also the self one may wish to present. In this regard, cosmetics provide the opportunity to construct an identity, rather than merely present an existing one. In the commercial for his Velvet Noir Major Volume Mascara, Marc Jacobs recounts his childhood memories watching his mother’s cosmetic transformation, an inspirational character behind his beauty range. In Jacobs’ narrative voiceover of Winona Ryder’s portrayal of his mother, he described one of his mother’s beauty tricks. “She’d take a piece of black velvet ribbon, and she’d scrap it with a knife so that she could take the pile of black velvet to make the lashes even thicker and clumpier” (Youtube December 2015 0:10). The mascara is meant to recreate this volumizing trick. Jacobs continues

to share his thoughts on cosmetic beautification, stating "I just think the idea of transformation, creating this person you want to be, or show the world at any given time, is part of human nature and the joy of being a woman, or man, or a person" (Youtube December 2015 0:20).

With the opportunity to perform, or communicate, several different identities, it is worthy to consider how notions of the self are affected. Put differently, among makeup users, is the made-up self more them? Or is the barefaced self more them? An Instagram post (Figure 64 & Figure 65) by Buzzfeed, features the same woman at two different points during the day. At 8:15 a.m., after freshly applying her makeup, hair coiffed, and outfit on, she looks into the bathroom mirror and exclaims, "ah, there I am!" At 10:45 p.m. after a shower, both her body and hair wrapped in towels, she gazes into the same bathroom mirror, once again exclaiming "ah, there I am!" After sending this post to Barbara, she vehemently agreed with Buzzfeed's caption "this emotion is so real" (Instagram September 2016). According to Barbara, the post captured the identity fracture that cosmetic wearers often experience. Both the enhanced and barefaced versions of a wearer are truly "themselves." Furthermore, too much time spent either done-up or made-down causes a regular wearer to crave the other. Unfortunately, I found the post only after my interviews had been completed. Therefore the question the post sparked "do you feel like the same person with or without makeup," was only posed to a handful of informants.

Barbara insisted she felt like the same person regardless, the main difference being her confidence level. "I've always thought I'm the kind of person who looks drastically different with and without makeup. So I'm always a little scared when someone who's never seen me without makeup on does, I'll always apologize for looking like shit." Cosmetic and skincare retailer Diana was more torn on the topic, responding both yes and no. She determined that how much she felt like herself was dependent on how much makeup she applied. "When we go to our

staff Christmas party we all have like ten pounds of makeup on, and in those cases I won't recognize myself." Ultimately, she determined that she preferred herself without makeup, "it's just more me, I just look like myself." However, Diana mentioned "light" makeup looks achieved a happy medium, where she looked like herself "just slightly enhanced, not covered." During a makeup shopping trip with Kim, an acquaintance who professed her utter hopelessness with makeup, I posed the question. She admitted she only wore makeup for special occasions, and the whole topic mystified her completely. While we wandered the aisles of her local drugstore, she told me she didn't feel like herself with makeup on, although she didn't feel completely different either. She attributed this to the fact that she didn't wear regularly, so on the occasion she did "[she] saw the slight difference in [herself] more so than others might." She quickly added that not feeling like herself wasn't a "bad feeling," in fact, wearing makeup made her "feel better." However, her made-up face made her feel more aware, more conscious of her appearance "like I *know* I look slightly different."

Compiling Barbara's, Diana's, and Kim's responses, it appears as though one's identity is tied to the reflection one is accustomed to seeing. In Barbara's case, the face she most often presents to the public is done-up. Thus her sense of self with makeup on, her public version of self, remains intact. Conversely, she is also accustomed to her bare face and feels herself without makeup on as well. Barbara maintains both are equally her, but there is an appropriate time, place, and audience for each. Kim, on the other hand, an infrequent wearer, was far less habituated to her cosmetically enhanced reflection. "Look, look! Did you notice?" Kim asked me the next time I saw her, inviting me to weigh in on the new foundation we had selected together. It was apparent Kim's enhanced skin was at the forefront of her mind, a hyper-awareness she had described. I argue that not recognizing oneself immediately, caused by either a drastic or subtle

difference to the face, leads to a disassociation with the self. If Kim were to wear her foundation nearly every time she stepped out of her house, she would eventually become accustomed to looking at herself with makeup, perhaps she would even become uncomfortable without it on in public, and her idea of what she looks like would expand to include her done-up self, similar to how Barbara describes her split sense of self. To conclude, ideas of self are tied to how one expects they look, and in terms of regular cosmetic application, several selves are possible.

Rather than for the sake of men or other non-users, the majority of those that condemn makeup for its artificiality, bellamighair's post insists makeup is worn for the self. Of course this is not to say that makeup is never used to attract the attention of another, be it a romantic interest or other. The point my informants and these posts stress is that makeup can *also* be worn for self-satisfaction, and in this role it serves an empowering purpose. Social media outlets play an important part in emboldening so-called "woke culture," a social consciousness of the societal injustices and prejudices. Through these outlets users are supported and justified. Their usages are declared a continuation of the self, a practice that is more revealing than it is concealing, and its function serves an inner purpose that is all too often denied or ignored. It is unsurprising that the industry has seized the economic opportunity and aided discourses of makeup as self-fulfilling. However, this should not minimize the voices of those who claim makeup a vessel through which they are granted an identity of their choosing. Instagram user khloedosh uploaded a short, sped-up video of her makeup being applied. As cosmetics neutralize the patches her affliction with vitiligo has lightened, her voice-over recites a poem she has composed.

"Ignorance is bliss

That's how the saying goes, right?

But, what is blissful about a society treating your skin as if it will bite

You cannot find the beauty in things you do not understand however,

It's not their job to educate you when your eyes are glued to them in the street

Or when you decide to get up on the train because they took a seat

Your ignorance is the only contagious thing here

People will stare and they will whisper because they never met someone as beautiful as you

They'll call you a cow and laugh with their friends

Because they've never been up-close to one that can speak, eat, and walk like they do

This makeup you wear isn't meant to hide who you are or diminish your natural beauty

You are human

You're allowed options

You're allowed change

If there's any animal they should compare you to it's a chameleon because of your beauty's range

When you look in the mirror you should see how special you are

God decided to paint you in his own special design

He couldn't choose one shade so he blessed you with both

That kind of love will make anyone who's never had it, envy you

There's nothing ugly about you

You are beautiful

You are art"

-khloedosh Instagram March 2017

Cosmetics as Especially Oppressive For Some: Colorism of Cosmetics

Roth's Ultimate Norm

Thus far, I have attempted to flesh out both the empowering possibilities offered by cosmetics, and its oppressive underbelly. However, even more subjected to this oppressive aspect of cosmetics are users with deeper skin tones. Often neglected in the gradient of

foundations and concealers available on the market, those with deeper skin tones are commonly frustrated by shades that are disproportionately well suited—in that they precisely match the wearer's skin tone—for lighter skins. The purpose of these base cosmetics is to create an optical illusion, fooling the eyes into "feeling" a smoother surface. However, this cosmetic possibility isn't uniformly possible for everyone.

Lorna Roth's work indicates that a white assumption can be found in many other products besides those designed to adorn the face. Roth's "Looking at Shirley, the Ultimate Norm: Colour Balance, Image Technologies and Cognitive Equity" asserts that along with the development of film stock emulsions and digital camera design, cultural light skin biases have been embedded in these technologies. "Until about the mid-1960s, it was probably assumed by most users that visual media were designed to 'naturally' reproduce all skin tones equally well" (Roth 2009:117). However, as "photo technologies expanded to international markets, non-'Caucasian' communities identified short-comings and became more critical and questioning of their visual quality" (Roth 2009:117). In the 1950s, Kodak research scientists became aware of the problems their film posed when used for school graduation and class photos. Group portraits, in which students of different ethnicities and skin tones were photographed all together, resulted in a photo that "showed details on the White children's faces, but erased the contours and particularities of the faces of children with darker skin, except for the whites of their eyes and teeth" (Roth 2009:119). Roth indicates that darker skin tones posed challenging for photography to capture regardless, but could be "accommodated through compensatory lighting and a range of technical adjustments learned through experience" (Roth 2009:119). However, no such compensatory trick resolved the problem of diverse skin tones in a single photo. The

unsatisfactory photographs were noted by parents who "complained about this situation and demanded a wider continuum of darker skin tones" (Roth 2009:119).

Roth indicated that the difficulties darker skins posed was not a matter of science, but rather because "film chemistry, photo lab procedures, video screen colour balancing practices, and digital cameras in general were originally developed with a global assumption of 'Whiteness' embedded within their architectures and expected ensemble of practices" (Roth 2009:117). In order to match the colours beheld by the human eye to those captured by the lenses of cameras or video cameras, lighting and camera adjustments are made. In order to do this colours in the form of bar-line cards, objects and, or, subjects, are held before the camera, and adjustments are made until the human eye and camera lens perceive matching colours. This process is referred to as "colour balancing." Roth indicated "skin-colour balancing" in still photography, involved a photograph of a Caucasian woman "wearing a colourful, high-contrast dress [in order to] measur[e] and calibrat[e] the skin tones on the photograph being printed" (Roth 2009:112). These photographs or "norm reference cards" came to be known as "Shirley cards," named so by "by male industry users after the name of the first colour test-strip-card model" (Roth 2009:112). A Shirley card equivalent for "the colour-TV industry in North America" took the form of a "white porcelain "China Girl" used until the 1950s, at which time it was replaced by BBC cardboard flesh-tone cards especially designed for compatibility with National Television System Committee (NTSC) and Phase Alternating Line (PAL) broadcast technologies" (Roth 2009:113).

According to Roth, Shirley cards "have been the recognized skin ideal standard for most North American analogue photo labs since the early part of the twentieth century and they continue to function as the dominant norm" (Roth 2009:112). It is quite telling that reference

images predominantly featured female models. Roth indicates that "men wearing coloured shirts with similar skin-tone ranges and hair colours to those of female Shirleys could have worked as effectively as a reference standard—especially if they had had beards or moustaches. [As] these actually might have provided technicians with the practice to deal more effectively with the contrast issue" (Roth 2009:116). However, skin colour balancing cards were mainly white attractive females because they "conformed to a masculinist notion of beauty" in an industry that was "dominated by male employees in the 1940s and 1950s" (Roth 2009:116). As "technical and aesthetic decisions were being made by photo labs with regard to what constituted a 'beautiful' skin colour norm, there emerged a masculinist collection of sexy female imagery to tinker with, pin up on lab walls, and use in the colour balancing process" (Roth 2009:116). Thus Shirley cards not only served to colour balance technology, but more significantly, they helped to program "a white-biased standard" as the presettings of certain technologies (Roth 2009:117).

Interestingly, action to increase the dynamic range of film was only taken when Kodak received complaints from corporations selling brown items. In one instance, a company who sold chocolate complained that the "subtle variations between the dark and bittersweet and milk chocolates weren't as discernible" in photographs (Roth 2009:119-120). Similarly, "furniture manufacturers were complaining that stains and wood grains in their advertisement photos were not true to life […]" (Roth 2009:119). "Whether it was maple vs. oak vs. a couple of dark woods, this couldn't be distinguished in the photographs" (Roth 2009:119). Former head of Color Photo Studio at Kodak Park in the 60s and 70s, Earl Kage, did not recall pressures from the Black community to improve the image quality of Kodak's product" (Roth 2009:120). Rather, pressures were all commercially driven, as the public likely "assumed that such things were based on science and could not be changed […]" (Roth 2009:120). Often, it is assumed that

technology, as it is the result of applied math and sciences, is sterile of cultural biases and discrimination. In Vox's video feature of Roth's article, the expectations of technology are addressed. "Technology should be the ultimate equalizer. It should serve everyone's needs without an inherent bias" (Youtube September 2015 4:06). However, I would argue that a more realistic view of both technology and science, is that they are both shaped and furthered by humans, and humans are very much a product of their given societies. Therefore, it is unsurprising that cameras and film reflect certain features of society, in this case a light skin norm. The same can be said of cosmetics. Neither industry's pandering to lighter skin tones is "an issue of physics or chemistry exclusively, [rather] they [are] the result of cultural choice as well" (Roth 2009:118). It is certainly worthwhile to address the shortcomings of cosmetics and cameras, insisting that they be more inclusive. However, the root cause, or perpetuator of these injustices, is the wider culture. It is the light skin preference at the societal level that must be addressed. Once, or if ever rectified, technologies and foundations will undoubtedly follow.

Token Shades: Symbolically Ethnic

In September of 2015, Vogue.co.uk published an online article applauding contemporary beauty brands for expanding "their colour ranges to suit all races" (Vogue September 2015). Funmi Fetto, the author of the article, looks back on the late eighties, when "the choice of foundations for dark skin tones for black women was laughable" (Vogue September 2015). As consequence of the limited shade ranges of the time, Fetto's choices were either a "robust glow-in-the-dark over-ripe cantaloupe orange" hue obtained from obscure brands intended for darker women, or "the comically ghost-like finish [obtained from] the darkest shade available in [her] local pharmacy" (Vogue September 2015). "There was, of course, the other not-really-an-option option of going foundation free" (Vogue September 2015). However, for Fetto this would "mean

exposing [her] confidence-crippling blemishes to the world. This was a conversation [she] was unwilling to entertain; even with [her]self. The foundation stayed" (Vogue September 2015). Besides, as Futto put it, bad skin "would be rude to advertise - it was, at the very least, good manners to keep it under wraps" (Vogue September 2015). In the year 2015, Futto deemed the cosmetic landscape unrecognizable. "Brands big and small, from high end to high street, now have a spectrum of bases specifically formulated to suit dark skin tones. Estée Lauder, Dior, Lancôme, Clinique, Revlon, Tom Ford, Becca, Nars, MAC (arguably, they led the revolution), Yves Saint Laurent, Maybelline, Bobbi Brown, Armani, Charlotte Tilbury… it is pretty impressive" (Vogue September 2015). However, the problem with today's consumer, Futto explains, is that too many expectations are imposed on a single foundation. "Every woman wants the perfect shade, consistency, finish, packaging… And, of course, it must suit her skin type, last all day and work all year round. Oh, and if it comes with fringe benefits such as SPFs, blurring particles and anti-ageing ingredients, even better!" (Vogue September 2015). Determining that it is unreasonable to expect one foundation to do it all, Futto's solution is for every woman to own more than one foundation. In this way a wearer can select from their wardrobe of foundations one that suits their skin colour, skin type, and skin problems that day. While the search for foundations to add to one's arsenal is a difficult task, Futto guarantees her readers "that regardless of whether your skin tone is akin to Chanel Iman's or Lupita Nyong'o's or somewhere in between, your perfect foundation for dark skin is out there waiting to be found" (Vogue September 2015).

Futto's sentiment is correct, shade ranges, and the technology behind cosmetics in general, have come a long way since the 1980s. However, despite the efforts to extended colour ranges, the overwhelming majority of cosmetic companies continue to manufacture foundation ranges that mainly cater to fair to medium skin tones. As a result, darker skin tones are sequestered to certain foundations lines from certain brands. They're shades are not readily

available in just any line of foundations in the same way lighter skin tones are. Rather than offer all shades in *all* lines of foundations, many companies ensure they provide at least one line of foundation, out of several lines of foundation, as their inclusive foundation. This is the foundation the company can then champion as evidence that they incorporate all colours, even if their other foundations do not. L'Oréal is a perfect example. Their "True Match" foundation, intended to provide a shade for everyone, is the only foundation of their eight other foundations that offers shades outside the standard limiting colours. L'Oréal's slogan "because I'm worth it," insists that the consumption of their products reminds users of their worth. The idea behind the slogan is that a user is worth the cost of such products, and the time spent on applying them. Taken a step further, the sense of confidence and happiness such products can bestow, is said to outweigh, or is worth the time, effort, and cost. L'Oréal insinuated that their True Match foundation offered an extended colour range "because we are all worth it" (Instagram Toby_salvietto August 2016). As it turns out, everyone is worth it only some of the time. The rest of the time, lighter skins are worth it, and darker skins are left to make do.

Upon returning home to Great Britain, after a trip to the USA, Youtube celebrity, makeup artist, and entrepreneur, Sam Chapman, one half of Pixiewoo, published a video rounding up her Sephora purchases. In the description box of her video, titled Sephora Haul/Tutorial and A Rant!, it reads:

> "As a Caucasian woman sometimes it's easy not to really see or hear the problems that women/people of colour encounter with cosmetics on a daily basis. It is our responsibility to each other as women to make sure that we are listening and speaking up when we see something that just isn't right or fair because although we have come far it isn't quite far enough." (Youtube October 2016).

In the "rant" portion of her video, Sam recounted her experience shopping in Sephora. While filling her shopping basket with skincare and cosmetic goods, the Youtuber was determined to try a certain foundation. Much to her surprise, once she managed to locate the foundation in the sizeable store, only one shade of the foundation was on display.

> "I was like what's going on here? Anyway, a lady walked past and [I asked her] 'excuse me could you tell me where these shades are?' She was a beautiful black woman and she said, 'no, it only comes in one shade.' [And I said] 'how weird.' But she said it with such resignation, and [she seemed] so used to saying that, that it really pissed me off. [I said to myself] How can it be that in 2016 we can't do foundations for every skin colour? How is that? A long time ago, another story, I interview this makeup artist who has her own makeup range, and she was telling me that she had no foundation for darker skin tones in her line. And because she [didn't] own her company anymore, she had sold it to shareholders, [she told me] 'I really want to do those colours, because it's important to me, but the people in charge won't let me do them because those colours don't sell.' I mean if you don't make them you're not going to sell them are you?! I don't know what the stats are for the U.K. but in the U.S. African-American women spend 7.5 billion on cosmetics a year. I would have thought that was a huge money-making opportunity. I think if you can't do a full line of colours that cater to everyone, then don't do it. Likewise, if you're just going to throw in a token dark colour, just one, just to please people, actually that's even more offensive, just don't even bother. Don't do any foundations at all" (Youtube October 2016 7:34)

Holding up the bottle of foundation to the camera, careful to conceal the name or company of the foundation in question, Sam asked her audience "Who is this foundation colour for? Oh, it's for me. It's not acceptable" (Youtube October 2016 9:28).

Keeping in line with justifications that lighter shades are the norm, and therefore better sellers, Chloe shared an interesting experience. One morning her sister had an important event to attend, and as luck would have it, she ran out of her "Wake Me Up" Rimmel concealer. Chloe

and her sister drove to the five closest Shoppers Drug Marts in hopes of finding the concealer. But each drugstore only had the two lightest shades, of six shades, in stock. A week later, Chloe mentioned her futile hunt to a family-friend who suggested they check a Shoppers Drug Mart near her house in Brampton. Sure enough, the entire six-colour range was fully stocked. Chloe explained that the darker concealer shade was only available in Brampton, because unlike Mississauga, it has a larger South Asian population. Outside of these zones of high ethnic populations, Chloe insisted "it's near impossible to find the concealer in a shade that isn't fair or medium fair." It should be noted however, that in areas meriting darker cosmetics, the standard light cosmetics are still available. It seems that darker shades are optional and dependent on anticipated consumers, meanwhile light shades are permanent and readily available because they suit an imagined norm.

Roth argues that our everyday technologies and products are "coloured by the reference points, assumptions, and invisible norms of the cultural intermediaries involved in their design and marketing" (Roth 2009:125). Furthermore, by analyzing these technologies and products, one can recognize "how deeply embedded our cognitive processes the naturalization of Whiteness […] remains" (Roth 2009:125-126). However, Roth rejects the notion that designers and creators deliberately privilege Whiteness. Drawing on the work of Joyce E. King, Roth suggests instead that those responsible for programming a white partiality into everyday products employee a "dysconscious racism" (King, Roth 2009:126). Not to be confused with the "absence of consciousness" dysconscious racism is "an impaired consciousness or distorted way of thinking about race" (King 2001:295, Roth 2009:26). Roth described this as an "occasional, but passing, consciousness of the subtle racial implications embedded in practices, objects, institutions, and policies, and it represents 'an uncritical habit of mind (including perceptions,

attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs) that justifies inequity and exploitation by accepting the existing order of things as given' " (King 2001:296, Roth 2009:126).

In order to "undo the psychological damage of exclusion" Roth proposes "constructing a new or alternative set of body skin colour norms [that] represent images of success, belonging and inclusivity" (Roth 2009:127). To accomplish this, Roth introduced the notion of "cognitive equity" that "inscribes directly a vision of multicultural and multiracial equity into technologies, products, and emergent practices in their usage" (Roth 2009:127). Cognitive equity does not simply stop at "political correctness and the repair mode of design, which encompasses fitting or camouflaging' minorities into already existing values of Whiteness" (Roth 2009:128). The solution of cognitive equity seeks to accomplish more than "paint[ing] Caucasian-featured mannequins Black or Yellow" (Roth 2009:128), or producing one line of foundations that incorporates a wider range of dark colours than is customary. Cognitive equality, Roth argues, transcends inclusions for the sake of appearing symbolically ethnic (Roth 2009:128). It seeks to "broaden and publicly recognize the range and subtleties of all skin colours by normalizing them within the context of an anti-racist commonsense knowledge framework reflected within technologies, ordinary products, education curriculum, and the media" (Roth 2009:128). If cosmetic companies employed Roth's prescribed cognitive equity, those with darker complexions would not experience disproportionate colour matching issues. Both cosmetics designed to provide colour, and those intended to be colourless, would not look more favorable on those with lighter skins. As mentioned by Diana, a single product will rarely work on both light and dark skins. A highlighter that works for a light skin tone will not necessarily look right on a dark skin tone and vice versa. The problem is not so much that every brand of makeup does not provide cosmetics that match everyone, although this is a problem. The bigger problem is

that light skin tones are primarily catered to because they make up the "ideal customer." Darker shades are courteous additions, not a centralized ideal.

The Partiality of Light Skin

During my interview with skincare and cosmetic employee Diana, I asked her opinion on whether makeup brands cater to those with lighter skin tones. Her response was mixed. On the one hand, she agreed that "certain brands will offer a full range of lighter skin tones," [while] darker skin tones will be trickier to match." Here Diana is referring to the uneven distribution of colours in most foundation ranges. Often there are a whole array of shades and nuances that cater to lighter skin tones, while darker skin tones often have a more limited gradient to choose from. All foundation displays operate the same way. The lightest shades begin on the left-hand side, congruent with how the English language is read, and the shades gradually deepen moving towards the right. In order to differentiate between shades each is assigned either a name or a number, depending on the company. When numbered, the lowest number is assigned to the lightest and subsequently "first" foundation colour. The numbers then increase as the shades darken. It is in the right-hand, darker end of the spectrum, the most gaps in the gradient or skipping in colour is apparent. However, on the other hand, Diana indicated that those on either sides of the poles, with either really fair skin or really dark skin, will likely have a difficult time finding a colour match. "If you're a porcelain or ivory you're probably not going to have a ton of brands that cater to that. That's probably because most people, the general population, are not that light or dark." Additionally, "anyone from a light-medium to a medium-tan will for sure be able to find their colour in almost any brand."

During our interview, I asked Tanya, who is of Southeast Asian descent and has a deeper skin tone, if she struggled in finding a foundation or concealer match. She identified this

dilemma as “the crux of her identity.” One time, she’d even performed what she called “a social experiment.” On the same day, she went to two different sales reps, asking to be matched for the Nars All Day Luminous Weightless Foundation. Traditionally, sales reps will swatch, or apply a swipe of a given foundation colour on the back of one’s hand or along one’s jaw in order to determine which shade is best suited for the client. After a colour, or a few colours are identified as possible matches, the customer can either take a leap of faith and purchase the foundation, or most cosmetic stores, counters, and boutiques can provide a small sample of the foundation. This sample is free of charge, and permits the potential customer to take home the foundation, really putting it to the test. This service is provided because it minimizes returns and/or exchanges, and if the user likes the foundation, the sample can serve as a reminder or temptation to make the purchase. In Tanya’s case, the colours both sales reps recommended were drastically different. However, Tanya was hopeful at least one would match, and she took the samples she’d been given home, applying each foundation colour to either side of her face. According to both Barbara and Tanya, who are good friends and were both present during Tanya’s interview, both colours were unsuitable and did not match.

Chloe, also of Southeast Asian descent, echoed a similar sentiment regarding colour matching. In fact, she admitted she’s come to prefer the category of skincare to cosmetics because she wasn’t “the ideal consumer in the mind’s eye of most makeup brands, especially North American and European makeup brands.” She’d learned this during uncomfortable colour matching attempts where sales reps would continually fail to match her correctly. I questioned whether her prescribed shades normally ran too light or too dark. Interestingly, Chloe revealed that it depended on who was colour matching her. “The colour will be generally accurate when the person happens to be brown or black themselves.” In her experience, the margin of error was

larger when being matched by a lighter skin tone. “A lot of white women helping me will think my match is way too light or way too dark, and they will only realize their mistake once they put the foundation on my skin. And I will insist that I am a certain shade, but they will insist they know better and try other colours on me.”

The concern of *who* is administering the colour match was also mentioned by Tanya. She explained that those “who are not people of colour tend to match me with a foundation that is too dark.” Additionally, they have a harder time understanding the distinctiveness of darker skins. According to Tanya, among deeper skin tones, it is very common for the skin to be darker around the perimeter of the face and lighter in the center. This is common in light skins as well, except the difference in colours is usually much more subtle, if at all noticeable. This has to do with how easily melanin produces in darker skins, so the high points of the face are more prone to tanning. Tanya explained that the two-tone affect makes matching even more difficult, and bewilders many reps who have, and are accustomed to, lighter skins. Recalling an incident that occurred when she had been served by a sales rep with a light skin tone, Tanya was matched to the darker colour on the perimeter of her face. The sales rep insisted *this* was her colour, and if they matched her to her lighter central skin tone, she’d be too light and risk looking grey or ashy. Tanya shared with me her guess that among white people, going a shade darker is common, because looking as though they are tanned and more golden is desirable. Once matched to this darker colour, Tanya analyzed the sample of foundation in the plastic container reserved for those trying before buying, and “honestly it looked absurd, it was way too dark.” She shared her hesitation with the sales rep, but the rep insisted that after blending out the foundation, it would be a suitable match. Conversely, Tanya explained, those with a similar ethnic background to her are more reliable in producing a match. However, Tanya cautioned, if they are going to get it

wrong, it will usually lean too light, rather than too dark. Unlike the Caucasian desire to be tanned, as Tanya mentioned, people of colour prefer to look a little lighter. Tanya identified this as a result of "colorism in South Asian communities," where those with darker skin tones are discriminated against. Breaking down this complexity of darkening and lightening through foundation colours, Tanya explained that a white person with her skin tone, who has perhaps tanned to achieve that colour, might go a shade darker with their foundation. However, she and those of colour, will not.

As I have mentioned, I had asked Barbara to be present during my interview with Tanya. Given that they were good friends, and that Barbara had suggested Tanya be part of my work, I figured it would make for a more comfortable and informal discussion. Additionally, I asked that Barbara participate in the interview. If she had anything to add to Tanya's responses, or even if she wanted to ask Tanya questions in addition to my own, she was welcome to jump in at anytime. While discussing Tanya's "social experiment" and the particularities of being matched by sales representatives with different skin tones, Barbara put forward her hypothesis as to why people of colour were seemingly more skilled in selecting a foundation match for other people of colour. "I wonder if the reason that white sales reps tend to match darker is because they will identify a person of a different ethnicity from their own as much darker than themselves. So they will select a deeper colour because of their perception of this person being radically different from themselves, based on their ethnicity. But once they actually start swatching or applying the foundation they are surprised that the person of colour standing before them is not as dark as they thought, or as far away from their own colour match as they had assumed." Tanya agreed with Barbara's suggestion admitting that "this could be part of it for sure."

Another disservice done to the deeper, right-hand section of foundation ranges, has to do with a more involved breakdown of colour referred to as "undertones." Any foundation colour will fall into one of three categories: cool-tone, warm-tone, or neutral. This pertains to the idea that all skins, regardless of how light or dark, have either pink undertones, causing one to have a cool undertone, yellow undertones indicating a warm undertone, or a balance of the two indicating a neutral undertone. During our discussion on colour matching, Chloe described her particular issue with pre-determined undertones. "I'm darker than a white person but still on the lighter range for someone whose South Asian." This meant that she could find the correct colour match in most foundations, but the undertones would be off. "For example, I fit into the YSL [foundation] range, and I'm not the darkest shade they offer, but all their foundations have a pinky-peachy undertone, which is common in white skins, but not so much for other people. So everything in the range is automatically the wrong shade for me, even if the foundation is the right skin tone colour, all the darker foundations run too pinky-peachy." Chloe identified her skin as dark but neutral, making it problematic because most neutral shades, from any cosmetics company, "tend to be on the lighter or darker ends." This poses a problem for someone like her who is "smack in the middle," yet neutral. In other words, most medium to deep foundations, excluding the very deep, are almost always warm and cool, only rarely neutral.

Jackie Aina, a beauty Youtuber with a following of 861,956 subscribers at the time of her "August Beauty Faves!!!" published September 12, 2016, addressed her own complaints concerning inaccurate undertones among foundations. In the Youtube video, Jackie rounded up her favourite products from the month of August and shared her thoughts on them. While discussing her new love for the Kat Von D Lock-It Foundation, she praised the company for their recent shade expansion. According to Jackie, prior to the expansion, the foundations "ran

too cool" (Youtube 1:55). In other words, her criticisms indicates that the lighter shades had too much pink in them, and the darker shades had too much red in them. "And I know that a lot of people get mad at me when I say stop making your foundations run red because yes, you are right, there are women of deeper, darker complexions that do run cool and red. And I shouldn't encourage companies to not make red foundations, I get it, red is important too. But I think [many companies] are assuming that [cool undertones] are the majority when it's really not" (Youtube 2:020). According to Jackie the undertone assumption should run the other way because presumably, "a lot of women of deeper, darker skin tones usually run more yellow, more neutral, or more golden" (Youtube 2:26).

Undertones are an added level of complexity one is instructed to consider when selecting the correct foundation shade. However, the struggle with undertones is not exclusive to those with darker complexions. Barbara explained her struggle in finding the right colour match "even as a white person, which isn't common." During our interview Barbara expressed her surprise in learning that her colour match wasn't easy to find. "I had always heard that people of colour have a hard time finding their shade, and I figured that since I'm not a person of colour that finding a match should be a walk in the park, another case of white privilege, but it's not." According to Barbara her issue boiled down to her undertone. "I'm fair, but not super pale, with pink/cool undertones. It's usually only the porcelain or very lightest shades that come in pink. Once you get to the light shades they tend to be yellow or neutral, and it just looks wrong on me a lot of the time." Finding the correct shade can prove challenging no matter the colour or undertone of one's skin. It requires a trained eye to notice the nuances of shades and undertones, yet it is apparent to almost any eye when a foundation does not match. Put simply, experience and expertise are often required to select the right colour foundation, but just about anyone can

tell when the wrong colour foundation is worn. Furthermore the task of foundation selection is made considerably more challenging when one's shade is not available. As I have tried to show here, this can happen to both lighter and darker complexions. However, those with darker complexions are at a higher risk of failing to find a colour match because the darker gradient, towards the right-hand, tends to skip and is usually far less complete by comparison.

Many cosmetic brands have narrowed in on the frustrations and tribulations in choosing one's correct foundation. One way Sephora has tried to simplify this process was by digitizing it. The Sephora + Pantone Color IQ is a small hand-held camera that is placed on the skin in order to photograph and determine one's skin colour and undertones. This service is offered in store, free of charge. Once scanned, the machine produces a numeric code, indicating the colour category one's skin falls under, and which foundations throughout the entire store are a suitable match. However, this innovation is far from a perfect solution. According to Chloe Sephora's Color IQ is "pretty fallible [because] sometimes it doesn't choose the right shade and [Sephora employees] treat the machine like it's law, so you end up getting matched to the wrong colour." According to Tanya, the machine seemed to have the same penchant for darker foundations that white sales representatives did. In her case, Tanya's digital match required "human intervention […] to lighten the prescription." Although the machine is capable of offering a general ballpark, getting the colour exactly right without fault, seems to be remain out of the machine's reach.

Trying My Hand at Colour Matching: Shopping for Foundations with Kim

During some of my interviews, a comparison of colour limitations between drugstore foundations and department stores was mentioned. According to sales representative Diana, not only is it difficult to find a match for those with skin tones on either ends of the poles, but it is significantly more challenging to do so on a budget. At the drugstore, where more affordable

cosmetics and skincare brands are available, Diana asserted that a much more limited shade range is offered. Chloe affirmed that "drugstore beauty is only available in limited colours and those colours tend to be on the lighter end." Sephora, by contrast "is a better bet to find a match because they have a wider variety [of shades]." However, the drawback is "you won't find anything as cheap as you do in the drugstore, even if you buy the Sephora brand [the house brand]." The disparity she explained "is frustrating, in general women of colour have to spend a shit-ton more money on makeup just to have it look the right shade."

I encountered shade limitations at drugstores, specifically the absence of darker shades, first hand during an assisted shopping trip. As previously mentioned, Kim, a self-described makeup "noob," approached me to go foundation shopping with her for an upcoming wedding she planned to attend. In her words she figured she'd "at least try and make an effort to look presentable" for the upcoming occasion. On the intended date and time, we met at her local Pharmaprix to begin our shopping. I was incredibly nervous to shop with Kim for several reasons. Firstly, I am not, nor have I ever been trained as a makeup artist, and I have very limited experience colour matching others. The majority of my experience is matching my own skin tone, a fairly easy colour to match because fair neutral is the most widely available shade. Secondly, this shopping trip took place after both my interviews with Tanya and Chloe, who both informed me of the "white consultant tendency" to match people of colour as darker than they are. I did not want to repeat this supposed tendency. Lastly, given Kim's budget our selection was restricted to drugstore foundations which typically have limited "tester" products. This means swatching a foundation is not always possible. As if choosing a foundation wasn't hard enough, I would have to eyeball foundation colours through their glass bottles. A difficult task given glass, especially frosted glass, tends to warp colours. I had my work cut-out.

Before going into the Pharmaprix, in an attempt to better prepare myself, I asked Kim if she had used any foundations or concealers before. Impressively prepared, Kim pulled out a small pouch that contained her entire makeup collection. From the pouch, she selected two products to show me, a Maybelline FIT ME Matte and Poreless powder and a foundation. Upon seeing these products I felt deflated, this was the exact foundation I had been prepared to recommend. From what I could tell online, the foundation had a decent shade range, so I was hopeful we could find something for her darker Southeast Asian complexion. She told me she liked the products, and had purchased them with the assistance of a friend, a year and a half ago for the last wedding she had attended. While the colour of foundation suited her skin during the colder months, she had become more tanned during the warmer months, and by the month of July, the shade no longer suited her. She confessed that given her positive experience with the foundation, she could simply purchase the same foundation in a darker colour. However, she wanted to try something new.

In an effort to gauge the level of coverage Kim was looking for, I inquired about the purpose of the foundation, what exactly she wanted it to do. She explained that she wanted a foundation to cover her "discoloured spots," referring to the hyperpigmented spots left behind from acne. Mirroring Tanya's insecurities with her skin, Kim explained that the spots were the remainders of pimples that were no longer active. When she was in her early teens, she recounted, she experienced minor acne, but they never left behind superficial scarring. Now, in her early twenties, a dark spot followed nearly every breakout. Pointing to a spot on her chin, she told me that she could feel a pimple surfacing due to increased sensitivity and the mound she could feel forming. However, she wasn't worried about the active pimple, nor how big and visible it would be. Rather, she was worried about the darkened spot it would leave behind,

because these spots she explained, “hang around forever.” Both Tanya and Chloe explained that hyperpigmentation was a bigger problem among darker skin tones due to its ability to produce melanin at higher and faster rates. In any skin tone, sun exposure will often unevenly darken post-acne marks. However, this is more exaggerated in darker skin tones because of higher melanin production. As a person ages, skin cell turnover rates reduce. This means old, damaged, or pigmented cells are sloughed off more slowly. This likely accounts for why Kim, and other darker skin tones, only experience lingering dark spots as they mature. In any case, these darkened spots are usually flat and do not compromise the texture of the skin. This means that darkened spots are usually simple to conceal with foundation. Seeing as Kim’s only expectation was that these spots be concealed, and that she was not accustomed to wearing foundation, I decided a light coverage foundation would be best. However, my initial recommendation was no longer viable. Feeling somewhat panicked, I realized new possibilities would need to be explored.

While pacing the cosmetic aisle with Kim, it became quickly apparent that many brands did not offer a dark enough option. To add to our frustrations, most brands only presented one shade to be a “tester” shade, and this shade was only ever a light shade. Out of desperation, we began unlawfully ripping off packaging in order to get a sense of the darker foundations on Kim’s skin. While keeping an eye out for employees, who would surely reprimand us if they discovered we were opening sealed bottles, we discovered the L’Oréal True Match Lumi Cushion Foundation did not offer a dark enough colour. None of the Rimmel foundations seemed dark enough. Covergirl TruBlend Liquid Makeup did not have a shade dark enough. Revlon Colorstay Makeup for Combination/Oily Skin did not have a shade dark enough. Running out of options and hope, we happened upon a match. Maybelline Dream Fresh BB, in

"deep," the darkest of five shades, proved promising in a swatch on both Kim's hand and jaw. It is worth noting that the only other suitable colour match we found was the L'Oreal True Match, but this offered a fuller coverage than Kim was looking for. As I have mentioned, Kim is of Southeast Asian origin, and even at her darkest, Kim was far from a deep-deep skin tone. Shopping with Kim allowed me to confirm that affordable pharmacy brands are not a viable option for anyone with a deeper skin tone than Kim's, who was astonishingly only a medium to deep colour. It was in this moment, I felt as though I was really experiencing the inequalities of the supposed democratic beauty industry.

After settling on the BB Cream, Kim suggested we select a powder to go overtop the foundation. Her previous shopping companion had told her that a powder would "set" the foundation, ensuring it would last longer and wear better on the skin. In my experience, a translucent powder would work well for this. However, Tanya and Chloe contested this point, indicating that translucent powder was not always translucent on darker skins. To avoid the dreaded ashiness or white cast a translucent powder might have on her skin, we selected the same powder she already owned, from the Fit Me range, but in a darker shade. Like the foundation, the powder was the darkest shade offered in the range. Content with our selection, Kim purchased the two products. She told me she was excited to try the foundation and powder, and remained hopeful they would match. I asked her to keep me updated on the products, admittedly both nervous and skeptical about whether they would match. Since we had picked the darkest shade, I was nervous I had encouraged her to go too dark, thus following the role of the white person recommending a shade that is too dark.

A week later I met up with Kim. Upon spotting me, she exclaimed, "look at my skin! What do you think!?" Impressed, I remarked that it looked great and I couldn't even discern

foundation on the skin, it was the perfect match. “I know!” she agreed excitedly, and she proceeded to thank me for choosing such a great foundation. I felt relieved and proud of myself. I had not repeated the white sales rep blunder; I had accurately matched a skin tone that was darker than my own. However, at the back of my mind, I knew I got lucky. I was lucky because she had wanted a foundation with lighter coverage, and due to their sheerness more leeway in terms of colour accuracy is afforded. A full coverage foundation is much less forgiving. If the colour is not exact, the failure will be much more apparent. Additionally, BB Creams, which stands for Beauty Balm Creams, are multitasking products that offer both coverage and skincare benefits. Among their impressive list of benefits, the foundations are said to contain pigments that adjust to one’s skin tone, expanding the margin of colour error further. Had Kim asked for a full, or fuller coverage foundation, I am quite convinced we would not have been so lucky.

Colour Struggles with Products Besides Foundations

As I listened to women with darker skin tones describe their struggles with cosmetic, I was surprised to learn that their difficulties were not limited to foundation colours. As Diana put it, “deeper skin tones will find it challenging with almost everything.” She explained that “when you put a pigment on a different colour, that colour will affect and change the pigment.” According to Diana, lighter skin tones, which she described as more “beige,” are a sort of non-colour. And for this reason, cosmetic pigments are less warped on lighter skin tones. She explained that “if you put a red on a beige, it probably will not change as much as putting a red on a brown. So for darker skin tones, it is more challenging because the pigment changes.” Diana continued to describe light and dark skin tones as somewhat opposing, so much so that products are rarely suitable for both. “A highlighter that fits ¾ of the population probably won’t suite someone with a darker skin tone, unless it’s made for a darker skin tone. But the opposite is also

true, something made for a darker skin tone won't look right on a lighter skin tone. On a light skin tone a product can some off orange, whereas on a darker skin tone the same product can come off golden."

Tanya's experience paralleled that of Diana's. During our interview, Tanya mentioned that many lipsticks look drastically different on herself than on someone with a lighter skin tone. "Lolitta" one of Ka Von D's most popular liquid lipstick shades, was hailed as an example. While the lipstick looked more "natural, more like an everyday lip colour" on Tanya, on Barbara, the lipstick was more suitable as a "going out colour, more appropriate for night time." Tanya explained that the pigment in darker lips and skin causes colours show up differently. Tanya also addressed an "issue with representation." She explained that makeup companies rarely advertise their products on deeper skin tones. "This makes it harder for deeper skin tones to shop for, and imagine, what certain products would look like on themselves, especially during online shopping." Instagram user "ikrxk" (Figure 76) echoed Tanya's sentiment in a post where pictures of the same lipstick applied to a light and dark skin tone, was contrasted. The post indicates "same shade, different tones. Dear all cosmetic companies display your shades on all tones thanks" (Instagram April 2016). In the caption, cosmetic vendor Beautylish is tagged. I do not know whether this was done to encourage Beautylish to provide pictures of swatches on different skin tones, or to applaud them for doing so, but I can confirm that a year later, Beautylish provides swatches of all cosmetics on at least a light and a dark skin tone, sometimes even a third medium tone as well. It is probable that complaints like Tanya's have been heard by several cosmetic companies, and there has been an overall increase in swatch representations. However, it should be noted that in the event swatches are provided on only one skin tone, that tone is unsurprisingly always light.

Interestingly, the discrepancy between cosmetics on light and dark skin tones is not limited to products that provide pigment. According to Chloe, certain products that are intended to be invisible on the skin, can appear white or grey on darker skin tones. Chloe explained that "silicone based primers" using Lancôme's as a point of reference "tend to look a little powdery or a little white cast." Sunscreens also posed a similar problem for her as well. "So unless I wear a thick foundation, which I rarely do, the white cast will still show up and it looks as if I lightly dusted my face with powdered sugar. And it will look like this the whole day, unless I sweat it off." To date, Chloe admitted she has only found one sunscreen that does not appear "off" on her darker skin. Jackie Ainia experienced a similar problem in her $52 Face Primer VS $15 Primer Youtube video. The purpose of the video was to compare the effectiveness of two similar primers at different price points. Both the Hourglass Veil Mineral Primer and the NYX Angel Veil Primer are intended to smooth the skin, minimize the appearance of pores, and enhance the appearance and longevity of makeup. In order to test the products, Jackie applied one to either side of her face. While she found that the NYX primer leaned more white in colour, Hourglass leaned more purple. "Now this purple is every black girl's worst nightmare, okay" (Youtube June 2016 3:00). She explained that the purple tint is attributed to an ingredient in the Hourglass primer called titanium dioxide, which works as an effective sunscreen but "typically comes off purple on [deeper] skin tones" (Youtube June 2016 3:20). Wearing the Hourglass primer without a foundation overtop, which is something she admitted she liked to do occasionally, was not possible "because shit going to make you look like Barney" (Youtube June 2016 3:41). In the end, she dubbed the NYX primer the winner of the competition, concluding that there was not a big enough difference between both primers to justify the cost of the more expensive option.

In another video, titled Products I Hate Makeup Tutorial (Roasting Makeup Products), Jackie Ainia applied a translucent powder, the Makeup Forever Ultra HD Loose Powder. In keeping with the theme of the video, the powder was applied to show the audience the faults of the product. While the powder performed well for film, the true shortcomings became apparent in flash photography. Insisting flash caused the powder to become "too stark white" (Youtube August 2016 5:25), Jackie confirmed the powder was too unreliable "unless of course you are going for the goblin look, and the goblin look is popping one month out of the year, and unfortunately [right now] it's the month of August" (Youtube August 2016 5:09). A far cry from translucent for "medium dark to deep dark," (Youtube August 2016 5:05), the Youtuber offered her solution "I feel like what they need to do is make this powder in more shades, like a golden or a tan" (Youtube August 2016 5:57).

A similar problem occurred when Jackie applied the Urban Decay Naked Skin Color Correcting Fluid. Adhering to "color theory" colour correctors are said to conceal unwanted colour by placing an opposing colour overtop. For example, if someone had redness in their skin, red's opposing colour, green, would be placed overtop in order to counterbalance the redness. Then a flesh toned concealer would be applied overtop the green, returning the skin to a desirable colour. Jackie's review focused on the peach-coloured corrector, a colour that is typically used under the eyes to counteract any purple-blue darkness. She explained that "[she] was so here for the Urban Decay Naked Skin Colour Correctors until [she] saw the shades" (Youtube August 2016 16:11). The problem was the shade of peach. "I usually correct with peach, but this is a really, really light. There are many variations of peach you guys, there's light peach, there's medium peach, and there's DARK peach okay! For those of us that are melanin infused, we can't use these. But I love the idea of them, they swatch nicely, and I've got tons of

people tagging me asking me to review these" (Youtube August 2016 16:27). Holding up a swatch on the back of her hand to the camera, the contrast between the her skin and the corrector evident, she rhetorically asks her audience "what am I going to review? How am I going to review these, how?" (Youtube August 2016 16:45). Most remarkably, at the time of Jackie's video Urban Decay only carried one shade of peach colour corrector simply named "Peach." However, nearly seven months later, "Deep Peach" has joined the family of Urban Decay colour correctors. Perhaps this is a testament to the sway content creators with large followings increasingly have over beauty brands, or maybe the voices of those who dispute shade inequalities have grown stronger. In either case, similar shifts in the cosmetic landscape are becoming more apparent. However, what remains stubbornly unchanged is a light-skinned assumption.

In her August Beauty Faves!!! video, where Jackie rounded up her favourite products of the month and shared her thoughts on them, she spoke about a the Kat Von D High Voltage Eye Primer. While she gave rave reviews, the primer had "more of a flesh tone" (Youtube September 2016 3:19), in comparison to another primer she's discussed earlier on in the video. Speaking directly to Kat Von D, perhaps out of both humour and hinting at the influence content creators possess, Jackie pleaded "Kat? Can you just do me one favour though? [...] Aunty Kat? Can you just make one more colour that's […] more of a caramel colour? So that we can have more than one colour flesh, because [Kat Von D's] a beige, you know?" (Youtube September 2016 3:30). Although she is admittedly critical, the Youtuber explains that she still recognizes the progress Kat Von D has made by the recent shade expansion of her Lock it Tattoo Foundation. "I'm on your side though Kat, because I see what you're doing, and I'm here for it, […] I'm here for the movement girl (Youtube September 2016 4:10). Jackie points out that while some progress is

being made, a light skin assumption remains persistent. A light-skinned setting remains the prevailing mold cosmetic companies observe. Darker skins are expected to conform, blending, mixing, or adding additional products in order for the product to "work" for them.

Concluding Remarks on Shade Limitations

Jackie Aina presented at Youtube's Brandcast talk in 2017, a convention where Youtubers with large followings who represent the brand are given a platform to speak to an audience about their work and experiences. In her talk, Aina addressed the limitations in terms of representation in the cosmetics industry and in the online beauty community. Aina began by recounting her first experience at a beauty counter. As a self-described "late bloomer," at eighteen she was ready to begin using cosmetics for the first time. Upon approaching the beauty counter, the Youtuber described the sales peoples' demeanor as "panicked." "Oh my God, the girl with dark skin is here! What do we do?!" (Youtube May 2017 0:22), exclaimed Aina, coupling their expressions with an imagined narration. Despite the alarm of the sales people, Aina asked one to do her makeup. "Let me tell you, this lady made me look horrible. I walked outta there looking like 50 shades of grey" (Youtube May 2017 0:40). Aina points to this moment, as the moment she decided she'd never depend on another to decide what she should look like. She'd have to hone her cosmetic skills in order to take control of her own appearance. Aina points to some of the first beauty content creators on Youtube as not only teaching her to how apply makeup, but they nurtured her love for cosmetics as well. However, these pioneers all had much lighter skin tones than Aina's. This posed a problem because Youtube beauty videos entice their audiences to buy products because they can see them, applied, worn, and reviewed. However, these products were only ever applied on women with features very different from Aina's, thus skewing the point of the review. "I would look around on Youtube and I would ask,

'where are the people that look like *me*?" (Youtube May 2017 1:47). And it was from this question that launched her Youtube platform. Once she began, Aina's following grew rapidly. It became "clear that there was a huge demand for a dark skin beauty creator" (Youtube May 2017 2:00).

Despite the apparent demand for a darker skin beauty Youtuber, Aina explained that she kept encountering "a perception in the beauty industry that women of colour don't buy makeup" (Youtube May 2017 2:14). This excuse has been offered by those in the industry to account for the reasons why a light skin partiality exists. More specifically, why dark foundation shades are not as prevalent. In her talk Aina challenged retailers by encouraging them to ask themselves if they are actually making products for women of colour, and if they are marketing to these women as well. "Black women alone make up 12% of the multibillion dollar beauty category. […] So we're here, we have a presence, and Youtube is an incredible way to reach us where we are paying attention. And I know that because I've been able to build a relationship with this audience that has been so largely overlooked" (Youtube May 2017 2:35). She attributes her efforts, and those of other minority beauty influencers who cater their channels to under-represented groups, as the cause for wider inclusions in the beauty industry. Women of colour, men, and transgender brand ambassadors are appearing for the first time. Parallel to this, new shades, created for peoples of colour are appearing on shelves like never before. According to the Youtuber, "attitudes about what it means to be beautiful are finally starting to change (Youtube May 2017 4:00).

While increasing inclusions are a significant accomplishment, Aina emphasizes the real effects this has on the psyches of underrepresented groups. "[What a lot of people] don't understand is beauty is about how the world sees you. […] When you don't feel like the world

acknowledges you, represents you, respects you. When you're made to feel unattractive or unseen, it makes you feel alone. It makes you feel unwelcome" (Youtube May 2017 4:16). The alienating potential of beauty products that Aina touched on, is explained by Jan Van Rooy, senior video camera designer at Philips Electronics, as the "psychology of how people WANT to look" (Roth 2009:129). And this, Aina points to, is the devastating message communicated to those not included into the fold of cosmetic marketing and product development. It is frustrating when one's shade of concealer is not readily available, or in some cases doesn't exist. However, the real blow lies in the message being communicated here, that one's skin tone is unusual, undesirable, and not worthy of being catered to.

Conclusion

In their April newsletter, Aesop, skincare and body care company, included a link to a video of an art installation titled "Skin and Environment: A Dialogue." Beneath the video of hypnotically swaying cardboard boxes, meant to represent the "permanent impermanence of the skin in motion," a blurb about the company's philosophy towards skincare is displayed.

> "Skin is a filter through which we sift and absorb all that is around us. Changes in climate, pollutants, medications and other skin stressors upset its delicate composure, and can bring about unwanted changes. Skin is permeable, and as mercurial as our moods. Aesop's philosophy is to care, protect, and not obsess. It is founded on the understanding that the wellbeing of your skin is the product of nourishment, protection, and a thoughtfully-composed way of life" (Aesop April 2017).

Aesop implies that all around there are good skin inhibitors, things that impact the skin in an undesirable way. These are countered, and good is skin attained, by incorporating ideas of health and balance into one's life. More specifically, by tending to the inner workings of the body, through diet, sleep, and ensuring low stress levels, and by treating the outer body by ways of skincare, these pesky aggressors are said to be countered. However, this "advice" has captured the attention of many people throughout the length of my work. One question has most commonly recurred: but is it *true*?! Colleagues, professors, and non-academic friends, family and acquaintances have all echoed a similar curiosity regarding my thesis, is it true that the skin can betray one's lifestyle choices? Is it true one's diet can affect the skin? Is it true that applying foods to the skin can impact it? Is it true that stress can crop up on the skin? Is it true that inadequate sleep can show on the skin? Rather than resolve the dietary, emotional, or fatigue problem, is it true that products can be relied on to either conceal or remedy the skin? Is both nature and scientific tampering vital for a product to be effective? One colleague even suggested I attempt to prove or disprove differences between skin types on a molecular level. My response to these "truth seekers" has always remained twofold. Firstly maybe it is true, and maybe it is not. Perhaps for some, their skins are more transparent and more readily react to what has been perceived as lifestyle aggressors. Perhaps some find a product to be tremendously beneficial, while others find it negatively impacts their skin or has no effect at all. There are too many differences between skins to determine a single "truth." This variation in skin, from person to person, is widely acknowledged in the world of skincare and cosmetics. Often, consumers are told by epidermal authorities what works for one person, will not necessarily work for another. It is for this reason selecting skincare or cosmetics are often treated as trial and error, or a journey one is encouraged to embark on willingly.

The second part of my response is that these questions are most likely unanswerable and irrelevant, under an anthropological lens in any case. This thesis, first and foremost, identifies and explores shared ideas about the skin and skin aides. If stress is widely held as a reason for undesirable epidermal symptoms, then it is useful, in regards to my thesis research, to operate under this assumption as well. Rather than pick apart and analyze the truthfulness of skin truths I present in this thesis, operating under the pretense that they are truths because others take these for truths, has necessarily allowed my work a deeper insight into how the skin works, how products are then marketed, used, and the limitations or limitlessness of their capabilities. In short, things are done, or not done, to the skin in order to manipulate it in some way. My concern is not how successful these products or practices are in their manipulation of the skin. Rather, my focus is the kind of epidermal alteration being striven for, and for what purpose. In her book, *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty are Used Against Women,* Naomi Wolf criticizes skincare companies, or what she refers to as "the holy oil industry (Wolf 1991:104), for employing a mysterious language, or "a prestigious Logos that confers magic power on the originators of it" (Wolf 1991:108). She continues to argue that the "mock-science" found in skincare advertisements and on packaging "cover[s] the fact that skin creams do not actually do anything. The holy oil industry is a megalith that for forty years has been selling women nothing at all" (Wolf 1991:109). I hold no such definitive opinions of the effectiveness of skin products, nor am I interested in exploring such avenues. As indicated by Jablonski, to make adjustments to the skin, or in this case even the attempt, communicates messages. This thesis seeks to uncover these non-verbal messages and intentions.

After lying to rest the validity of their natures, one is free consider what the activity of applying cosmetics and skincare mean. Much like the duality of the skin's function, in that it

facilitates touch and communicates messages about one's identity, there also exists a dual nature to skin maintenances. While cosmetics and skin care have become mandatory features of feminine beauty, many women express the joy, comfort, and actualization provided by the application of such tools. First used by women to communicate their political desires for a place in the public sphere and control over their own sexuality, cosmetics became synonymous with the modern woman during the Edwardian period. Furthermore, through their abilities to smooth texture, and achieve clarity or radiance, both consumers and venders credit skincare and cosmetics for their democratic concealment of personal divulgences. Dietary transgressions, emotional distress, and sleep deprivation are listed in my work as the major issues revealed through the skin that cosmetics and skincare help to keep hidden. In doing so, personal issues, hectic schedules, or simply appearing worn down, are also presumably concealed.

As cosmetics became legitimized, the term "paint" renamed to "makeup," they became a necessary means of feminine expression. Particularly because Western history indicates women's bodies have been imagined as requiring greater maintenance and adornment. Once mass marketed, to be a woman was to use makeup daily. Wolf points to this lack of choice, and emphasis on women's appearances, as the turning point in which cosmetics, and skincare by her account, became oppressive tools used by the patriarchy to limit women's success in the public sphere. My informant, Tanya, expressed similar feelings of oppression in regards to her use of cosmetics. After realizing she'd become terrified to leave the house without makeup on, she decided to temporarily do away with them altogether in order to regain her confidence in her naked face, a "development of character," as she called it. Both Tanya and Wolf highlighted the oppressive potential of cosmetics. If a dependent relationship with cosmetics is formed, then the act can veer towards oppression. On the contrary, the act of applying skin enhancers can also

become an empowering act. Concealing the flaws of the skin, and therefore the imagined shortcomings of one's lifestyle, was said to have a significant impact on a user's psyche. The sentiment here is that by feigning an appearance of someone who leads an idealistic life, not only causes them to be treated by others as though they do, but it can also make the user feel as though they lead a desirable life. In this pretense, skincare, but predominantly cosmetics, are effectively marketed and used with a weaponized connotation. In a similar way that weapons provide one with additional reinforcement in a battle, so do skin perfecters in everyday struggles against environmental aggressors, one's own self-doubt, the censure of others, and general gender injustices.

Much like the possibilities for oppression and empowerment that I argue cosmetics and skincare offer women, Homa Hoodfar identified a similar binary among veiled Muslim women. In her "The Veil in Their Minds and on Our Heads: The Persistence of Colonial Images of Muslim Women," Hoodfar highlights that while the veil has clearly been a means of regulating and controlling women's lives, "women have used the same social institution to free themselves from the bonds of patriarchy" (Hoodfar 1997:2). There exists debate surrounding the veil, if it correctly represents the Qur'an's image of appropriate women's clothing. Some argue that it represents more of a widely accepted cultural interpretation of one of the Qur'an's passages, which states that women should "cover their bosoms and jewelry" (Hoodfar 1997:3). Be it historically correct, or incorrect, the veil has nonetheless come to non-verbally communicate the wearer's strict adherence and commitment to the Islamic faith, as well implicit gender roles. Thus veiling, which has come to be understood as a stricter adherence to Islamic values, bestows its wearer with unprecedented privileges. Hoodfar identifies one of these privileges as "far more liberty in questioning the Islamic foundation of many patriarchal customs perpetuated in the

name of Islam" (Hoodfar 1997:24). Hoodfar goes on to provide an example of veiled Egyptian women successfully resisting arranged marriages, based on their assertions of the practice being fundamentally un-Islamic (Hoodfar 1997:24). Homa Hoodfar's chapter, titled "Working Women: International Perspectives on labour and Gender Ideology," illustrates the veil as assisting many Egyptian women in convincing family members of the legitimacy of their desires to attain positions of employment away from their homes. More specifically, the commitment to veiling can work to reassure a husband of his wife's piety, and the unlikelihood of her acquiring immoral behaviours associated with Western women. A husband is also put at ease because his wife's veil "communicates loudly and clearly to society at large… that the wearer is bound by the Islamic idea of her sex role" (Hoodfar 1997:115). Hoodfar's article exemplifies several husbands' newfound support of their wives' careers once they chose to veil. The chapter also reveals the freedom allotted to veiled women, who "diminish the antagonism of their menfolk by publicly adhering to Islamic ideology and the gender roles which are implicit within" (Hoodfar, 122).

Similar to Hoodfar's demonstration of the unprecedented opportunities for empowerment found in veiling, my thesis argues that skin aides can be framed much in the same way. Popularized during the Edwardian period, skincare, and cosmetics in particular, were meant to position women's sexualities under their own jurisdiction, offering them choices their female predecessors had never enjoyed. Soon enough however, a cosmetic expectation became assumed of women, and this expectation has continued well into the present day. Some feminist rhetoric rightfully criticizes skin aides for augmenting discipline and control over women's bodies. This thesis does not seek to counter these arguments. What it does seek to accomplish, however, is to complicate the one-sided narrative of cosmetics as oppressive. In short, by conforming to

these varying degrees of control, both veiled women and female cosmetic users are granted opportunities of empowerment. Thus the oppressiveness of skin aides can be subverted to allow windows of opportunity.

To summarize, it is important to note that applying cosmetics and skincare are things that some people do. Cosmetics themselves are not, nor should be identified as either oppressive or empowering. The potential for oppression or empowerment depends on the user's relationship with them. Peiss accurately identified "the public debate over cosmetics today [as] veer[ing] noisily between the poles of victimization and self-invention, between the prison of beauty and the play of makeup" (Peiss 1998:268). "When women put on a face, they continue to express ideas of naturalness and artifice, authenticity and deception, propriety and danger, modernity and tradition" (Peiss 1998:270). In short, skin maintenances are simultaneously oppressive and empowering. They create an artificial appearance, but one which allows users to actualize his or her true self. They are at once considered both a face and a mask. And it is the consideration and behaviours towards these products that determines whether they suppress or liberate.

Epilogue

Through the Skin

In the introduction chapter of Ahmed & Stacey's *Thinking Through the Skin,* the authors describe their collection of works as "focus[ing] on 'the skin', as the outer covering of the body that both 'protects us from others and exposes us to them'" (Ahmed & Stacey 2001:1). The kind of "exposure" the authors speak of here are the ways in which the skin is read, a topic which this thesis explores. In order to better understand the "reading of skins" Ahmed and Stacey propose

their position, one which invites readers—both of their book and of skins in general—to "think through the skin" and ask "how the skin comes to be written and narrated" (Ahmed & Stacey 2001:3).

Both the reading and writing of skins are achieved with a very important notion in place: the body and the skin cannot be separated. To do so, Claudia Benthien argues, would reduce the skin to a lifeless shell and the body's innards exposed. Benthien argues that because of this, as well as several historical shifts, the skin is not just a person's body part, but also "the place where identity is formed and assigned" (Benthien 1965:ix). Thus the self *has* a skin, and the self *is* a skin (Benthien 1965:237). Therefore, the skin is not only understood as revealing of one's inward emotions, but it is also a marker of one's identity. As stated in Marc Lafrance's & Scott Carey's "Skin Work: Understanding the Embodied Experience of Acne," "having" acne suggests that it is separate from the sufferer's person, "being" acne suggests that it is part of that person; it is, in other words, constitutive of his or her emotional and psychological lives" (Lafrance & Carey 2017). For this reason, Benthien points to authors and artists undesirably "read" by their skins who "tend to speak of a passive captivity in one's own skin, which is often experienced as stigmatized. Fantasies of overcoming and modifying the body surface by the protagonists in these works are marked by violence, pain, and anxieties over identity" (Benthien 1965:237). Benthien explains that due to the extensive *reading* of skins that take place in Western society, many whose skins do not produce favourable messages or identities, seek to *rewrite* their skins. Producing more agreeable and advantageous readings.

In their work, Lafrance & Carey emphasize the relationship between one's skin and one's identity. By exploring the experience of acne sufferers, the authors argue that "acne sufferers work on their skin […] because they "are" acne or, put differently, because their acne is such a

substantive part of who they are that they cannot ignore it" (Lafrance & Carey 2017). In their work "Bad Skin: Acne Sufferers and the Dermatologisation of Everyday Life," Carey & Lafrance argue that skin problems such as "acne-prone skin [must be] understood as something more than a passive surface inscribed with meanings that are read and interpreted by rational actors" (Carey & Lafrance 2017). Because Carey & Lafrance argue that acne in particular is "irrepressible, unpredictable and often impossible to control without medical intervention," those who seek to curb or minimize this skin affliction, participate is something called "skin work," which produces experiences unique to the acne sufferer. Heightened hygiene practices, refrain from activities that may reveal or irritate acne, restrictive diets are some of the experiences listed by Lafrance & Carey in "Skin Work: Understanding the Embodied Experience of Acne" as unique to those seeking to manage their acne. Thus "to identify as an acne sufferer is, at least in part, to identify with and through the skin" (Lafrance 2017).

By analyzing both the reading of good and bad skins, this thesis attempts to showcase the lived experience of shaping and writing the skin.

The Cosmetic Expectation: Feminists Critique

As this thesis mentions, the oppressive aspect of skincare and cosmetics among women is that they have become expected of women. Subsequently, due to their gender's cosmetic expectation, "good skin" has largely become women's duty and a burden. This is not to say that "good skin" is not a desirable feature among men. But given the frequency in which we have become accustomed to viewing women with cosmetically enhanced skins, there exists among them a smaller margin for epidermal imperfections. Ahmed & Stacey suggest that "in consumer

culture we are encouraged to read skin, especially feminine skin, as something that needs to be worked upon in order to be protected from the passage of time or the severity of the external world, and in order to retain its marker of gender difference in the softness of its feel" (Ahmed & Stacey 2001:1). Given that "skin surfaces will always fail to be smooth," Ahmed & Stacey indicate that this ideal can never fully be achieved. "Smooth and shiny surfaces that conceal the signs of labour as well as time [are only] ever worked towards, never fully attained. Furthermore, the authors draw on Anne McClintock's work in order to demonstrate that these unattainable standards are "the imperative of consumption" (Ahmed & Stacey 1997:2). The authors accurately note that in order for smooth skin to be desired, "skin surfaces are not smooth in the present," or not smooth enough (Ahmed & Stacey 1997:2).

As a result of women's treadmill-like progress towards desirable skin, Sandra Lee Bartky argues that ideals kept just out of reach attributes to the feminine body as more disciplined than the bodies of men (Bartky 1997: 95). Additionally, Barky suggests that this presupposes that the feminine body is defective in ways the masculine body is not. "Soap and water, a shave, and routine attention to hygiene may be enough for him; for her they are not" (Bartky 1997: 100). Furthermore, because women's bodies are constructed as requiring of greater disciplinary practices, women's bodies are "a body on which an inferior status has been inscribed" (Bartky 1997: 100). Bartky indicates that the inferior feminine body is part and parcel of an oppressive and inegalitarian system of sexual subordination" (Bartky 1997:103). Cosmetic discipline, as well as the other methods of body discipline specific to the feminine body that Bartky lists, are "system[s] aim[ed] at turning women into the docile and compliant companions of men just as surely as the army aims to turn its raw recruits into soldiers" (Bartky 1997:103). Thus, Bartky proposes women's bodies as a fitting yet neglected example of Foucault's description of

disciplined and self-policing bodies. “Like the school child or prisoner, the woman mastering good skin-care habits is put on a timetable” (Bartky 1997: 99). Because hers is a body, or in the perspective of the thesis a skin, that is more surveyed, she becomes like “the inmate of Panopticon, a self-policing subject, self-committed to a relentless self-surveillance” (Bartky 1997:107).

Figure 1. Hangover RX

DISCOVER A NEW APPROACH TO BEAUTY WITH FRESH

Be one of the first to try Fresh's new Vitamin Nectar. Get glowing, healthy skin with a mini facial, and indulge in a skin care ritual with a Fresh expert.

STE CATHERINE

August 5-6 | 12–6PM

Figure 2. Fresh Vitamin Nectar Event at Sephora (Invitation Received by Email July 2016)

Figure 3. Fresh Vitamin Nectar Display at Sephora (August 2016)

Figure 4. Fresh Vitamin Nectar Display at Sephora (August 2016)

Figure 5. Sephora Canada's Post on Fresh's Vitamin Nectar Mask (August 2016)

Figure 6. Sephora Canada's Post on Fresh's Vitamin Nectar Mask (August 2016)

Figure 7. Caudalie Event at Sephora (Invitations Received by Email May 2016)

Figure 8. Caudalie Store at Carrefoure Laval Mall (From Google Images: https://ca.caudalie.com/fr_ca/media/wysiwyg/spas-main/boutiques/group-ca/laval/Large1.jpg

Figure 9. Ultabeauty's Instagram Post (September 2016)

Figure 10. Bansihacnescars' Instagram post (October 2016)

Figure 11. Bansihacnescars' Instagram post (October 2016)

Figure 12. Origins Magazine Ad (Allure September 2016)

Figure 13.1. Clinique Ad from Allure Magazine (May 2015)

Figure 13.2. Clinique Ad from Allure Magazine (May 2015)

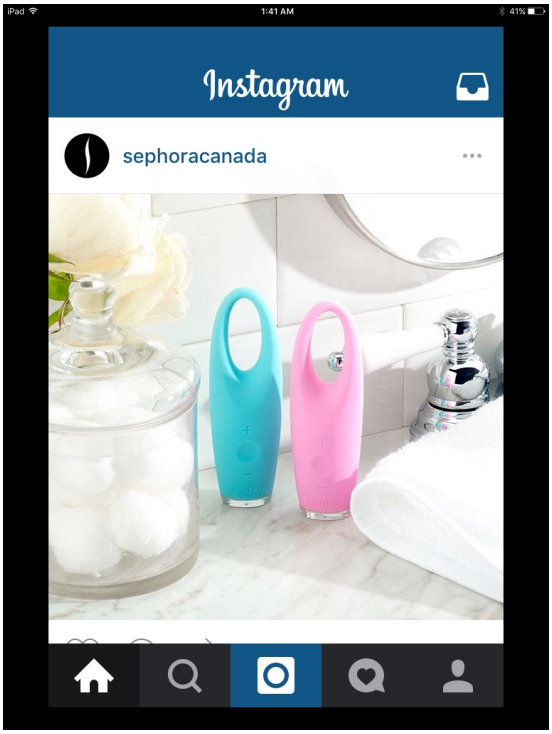

Figure 14. Sephora Canada's Instagram Post on Foreo's Iris Brightening Tool (March 2016)

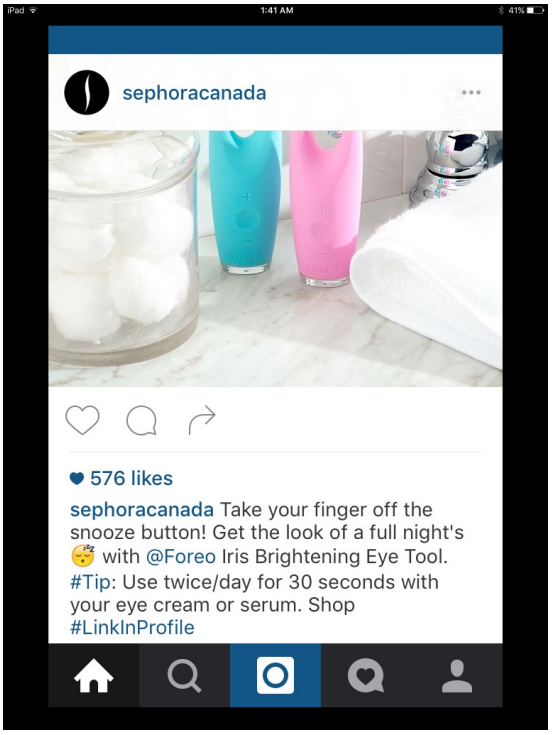

Figure 15. Sephora Canada's Instagram Post on Foreo's Iris Brightening Tool (March 2016)

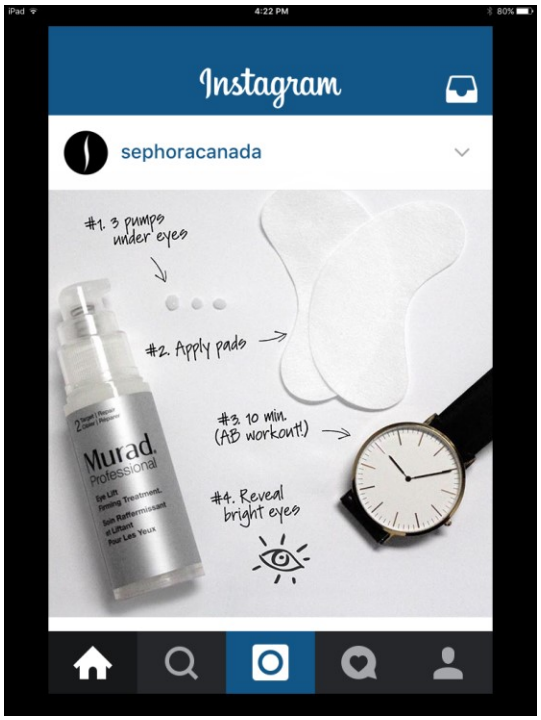

Figure 16. Sephora Canada's Instagram Post on Murad's Eye Lift Firming Treatment (March 2016)

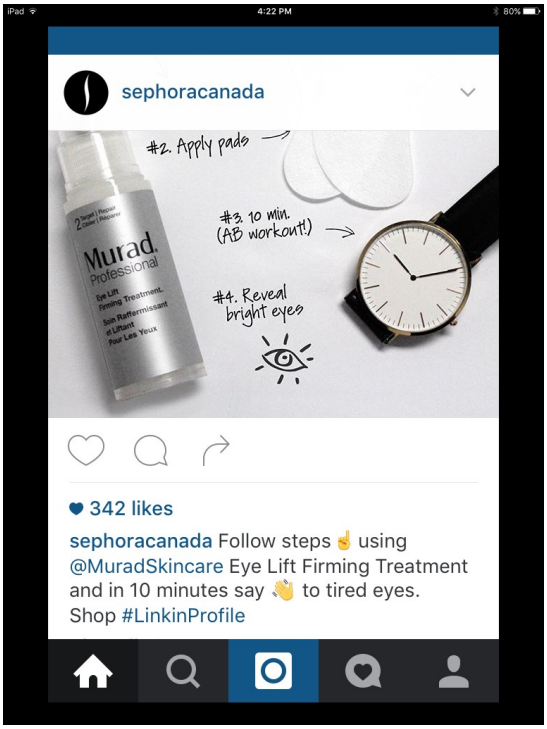

Figure 17. Sephora Canada's Instagram Post on Murad's Eye Lift Firming Treatment (March 2016)

Figure 18. Pixiwoo's Instagram Post (April 2016)

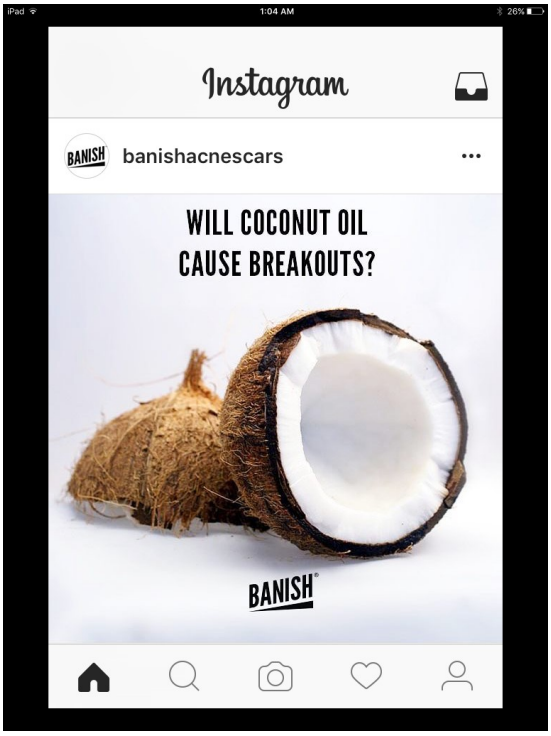

Figure 19. Banishacnescars' Instagram Post on Coconut Oil (June 2016)

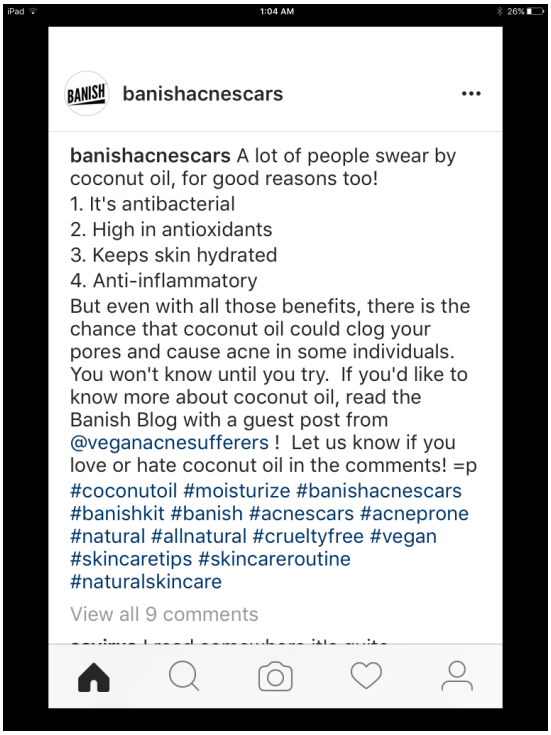

Figure 20. Banishacnescars' Instagram Post on Coconut Oil (June 2016)

Figure 21. Pixiwoo's Instagram Post (October 2015)

Figure 22. Tartecosmetics' Instagram Post (October 2016)

Figure 23. Tartecosmetics' Instagram Post (January 2017)

Figure 24. Tartecosmetics' Instagram Post (January 2017)

Figure 25. Jennyclairefox's Instagram Post (April 2016)

Figure 26. Makeupbymario's Instagram Post (March 2016)

Figure 27. Tweet by @Y2SHAF (February 2016)

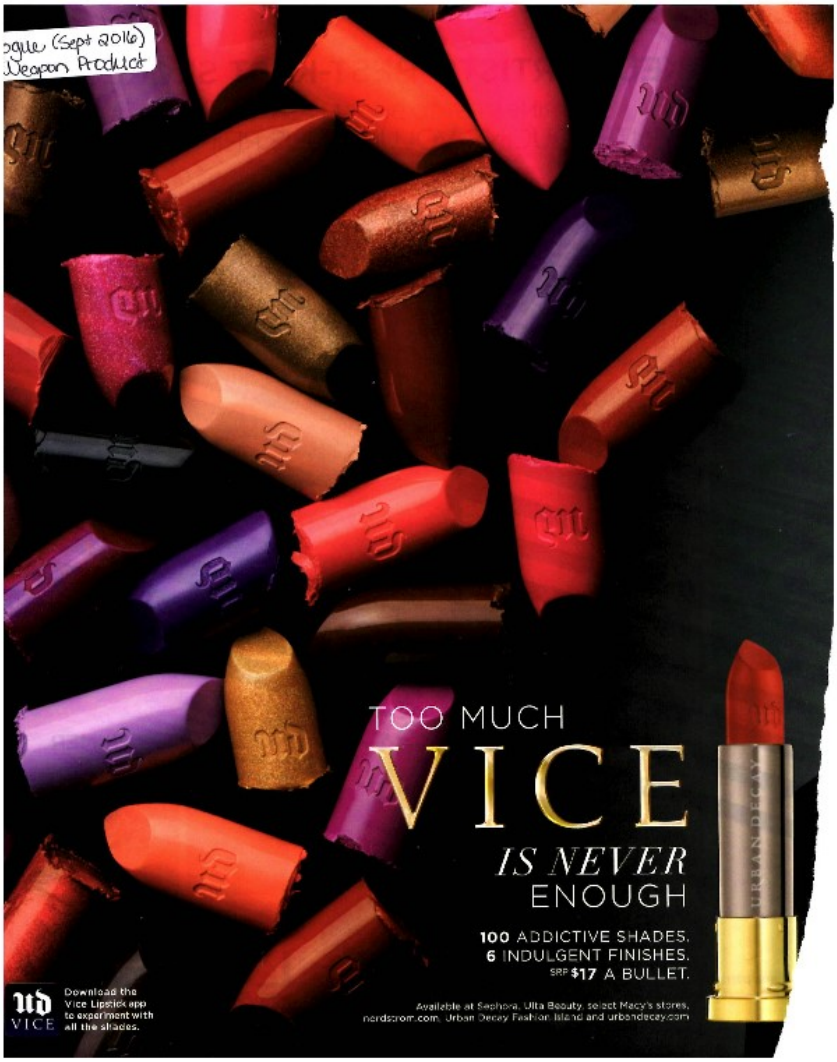

Figure 28. Urban Decay Ad in Vogue Magazine (September 2016)

Figure 29. Elizabeth Arden Ad from Allure Magazine (October 2013)

Figure 30. Origins Ad in Allure Magazine (January 2014)

Figure 31. Dior City Defence Discription Printed from Sephora Skincare IQ

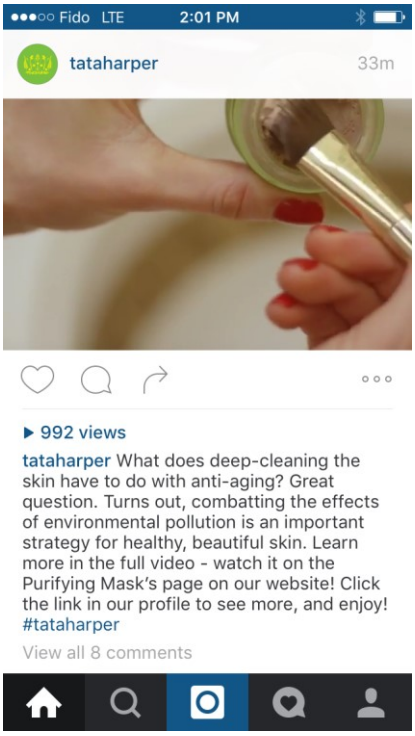

Figure 32. Tataharper's Instagram Post (February 2016)

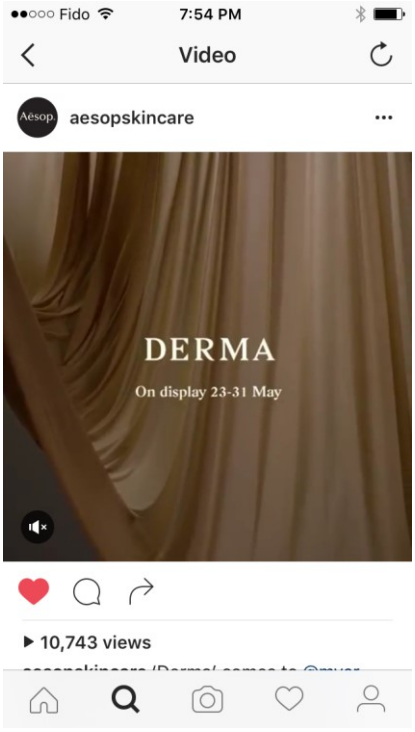

Figure 33. Aesop's Instagram Post (May 2016)

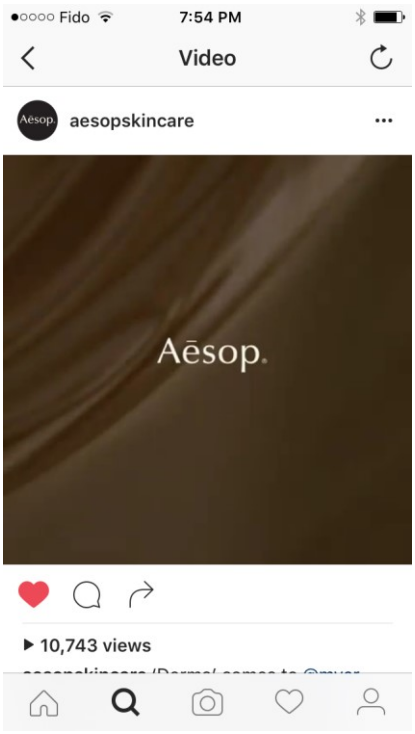

Figure 34. Aesop's Instagram Post (May 2016)

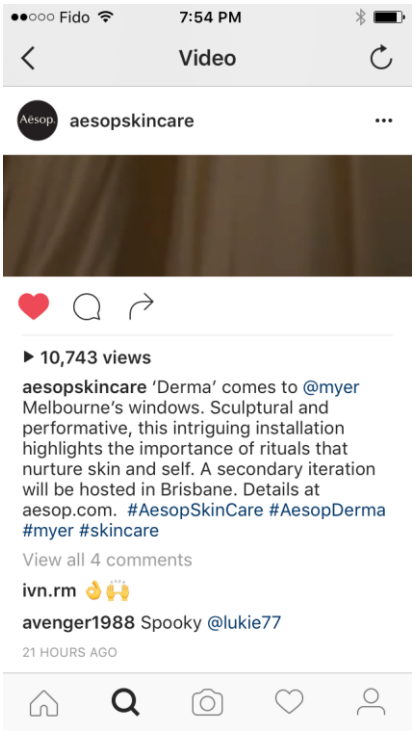

Figure 35. Aesop's Instagram Post (May 2016)

Figure 36. Carolinehirons' Instagram Post (January 2016)

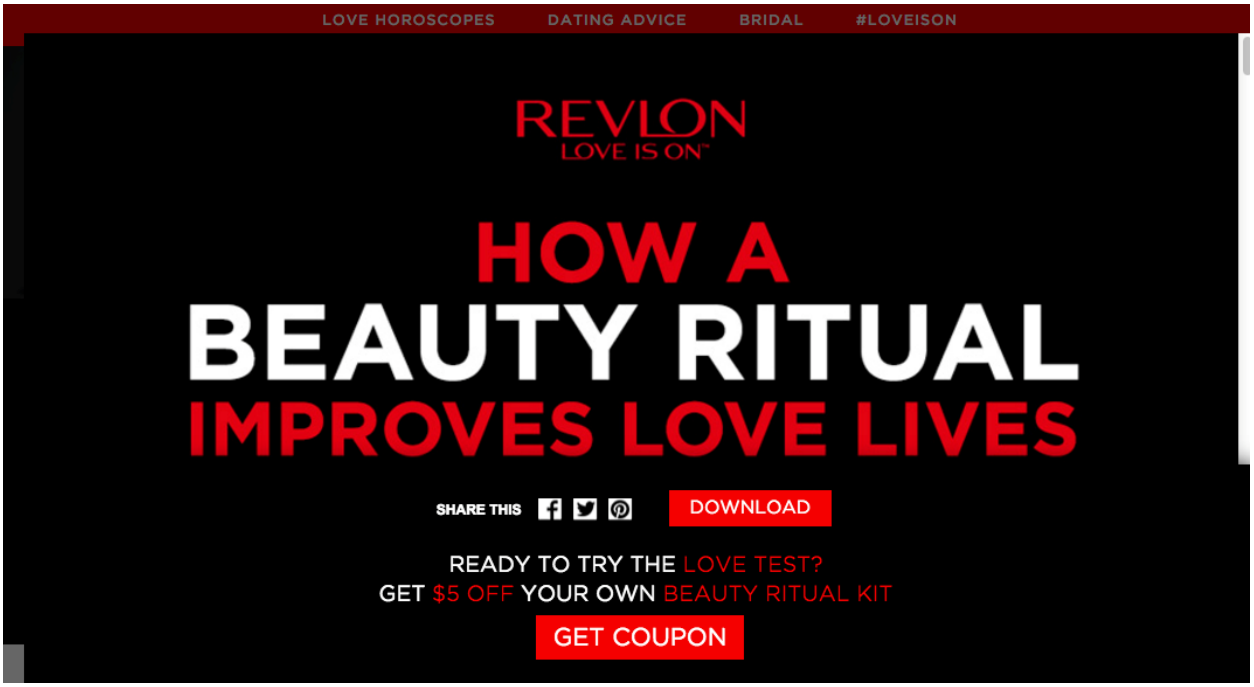

Figure 37. Revlon's Beauty Ritual (Revlon.com December 2015)

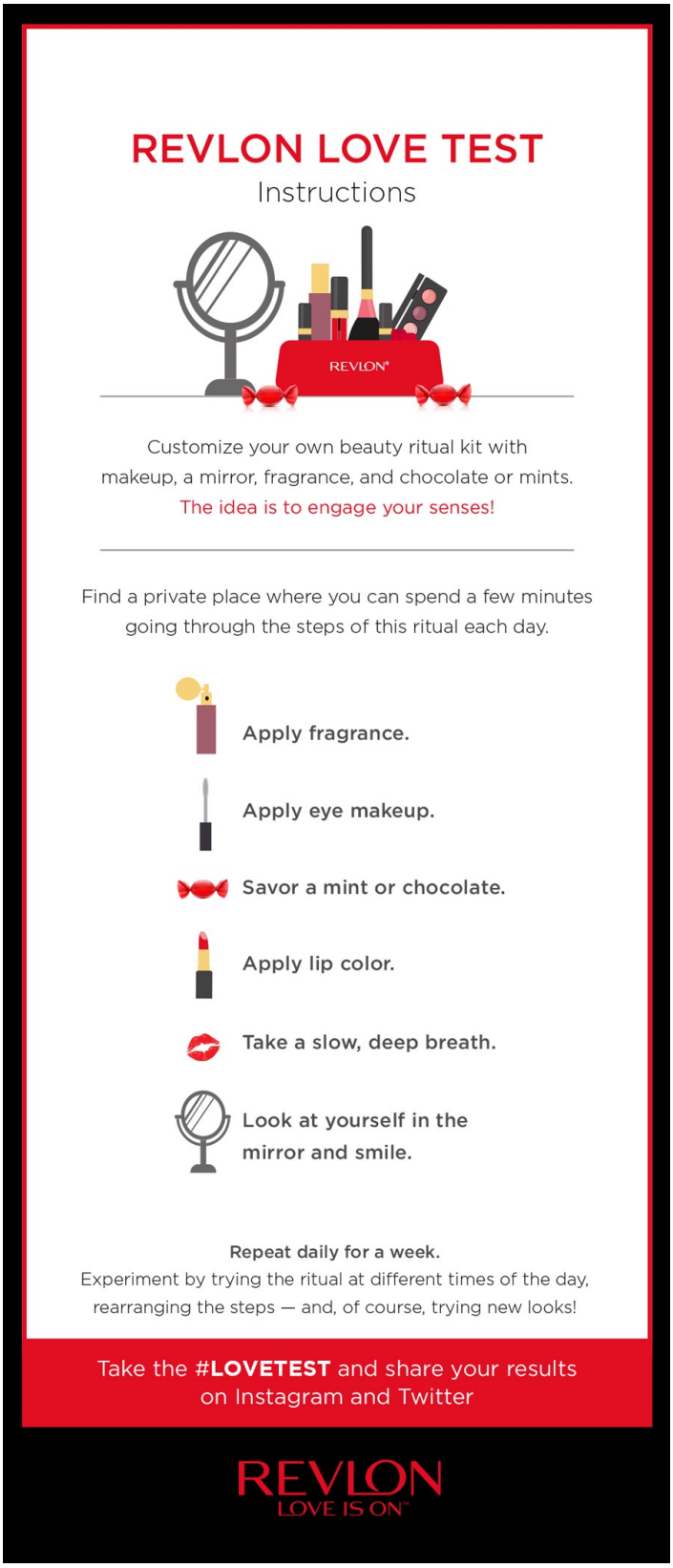

Figure 38. Revlon's Beauty Ritual Instructions (Revlon.com December 2015)

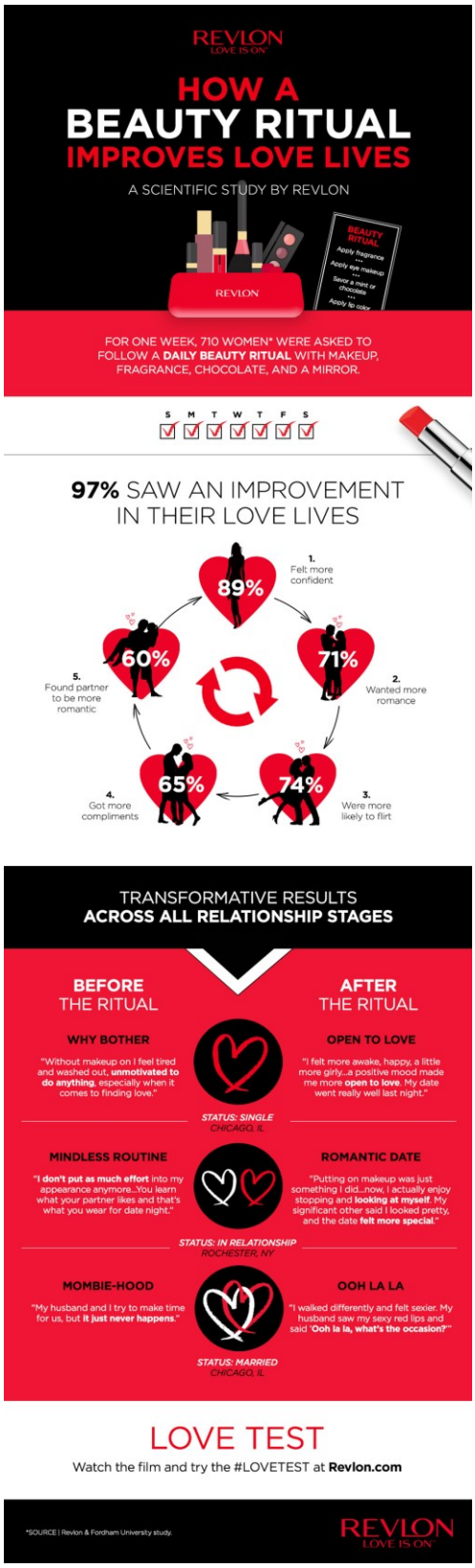

Figure 39. Revlon's Beauty Ritual Results (Revlon.com December 2015)

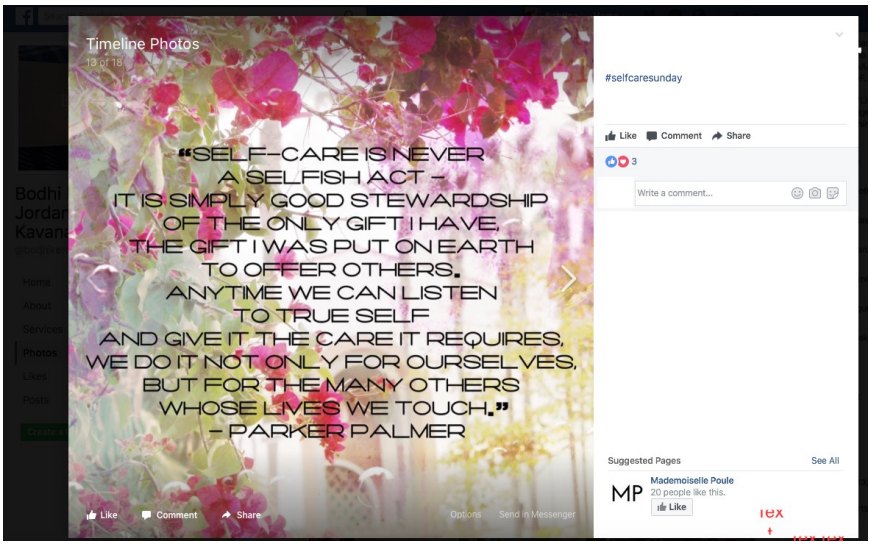

Figure 40. Facebook (February 2016)

Figure 41. Vogue's Power Play Article (June 2016 Issue)

Figure 42. Vogue's Power Play Article (June 2016 Issue)

Figure 43. Helena Rubinstein Quote

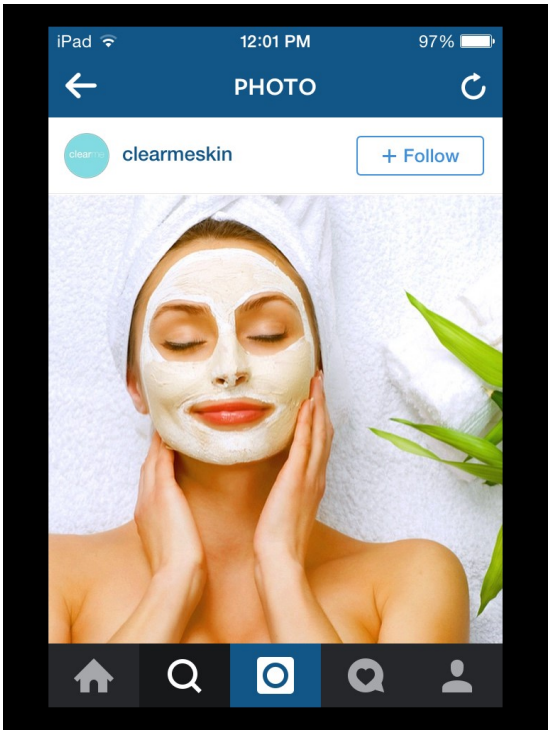

Figure 44. Clearmeskin's Instagram Post (April 2015)

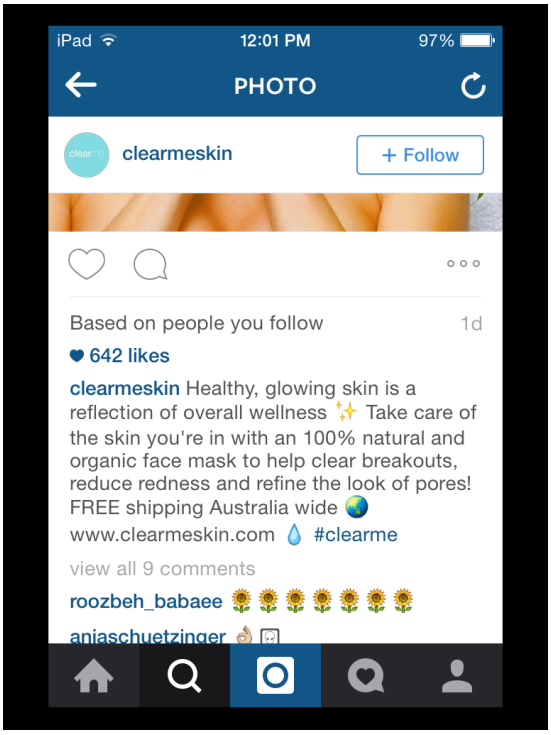

Figure 45. Clearmeskin's Instagram Post (April 2015)

Figure 46. Britishmuseum's Instagram Post (August 2015)

Figure 47. Britishmuseum's Instagram Post (August 2015)

Figure 48. Bareminerals Ad in Allure Magazine (March 2014)

Figure 54. An Email Sent By Sephora (June 2016)

Figure 55. Instagram Post on the Artifice of Cosmetics (April 2016)

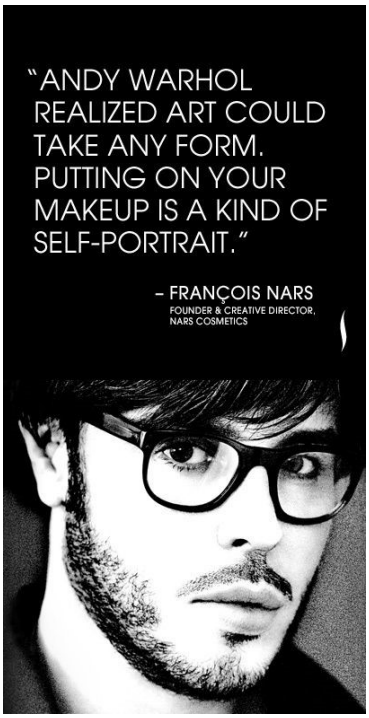

Figure 60. François Nars' Quote on Makeup as Art

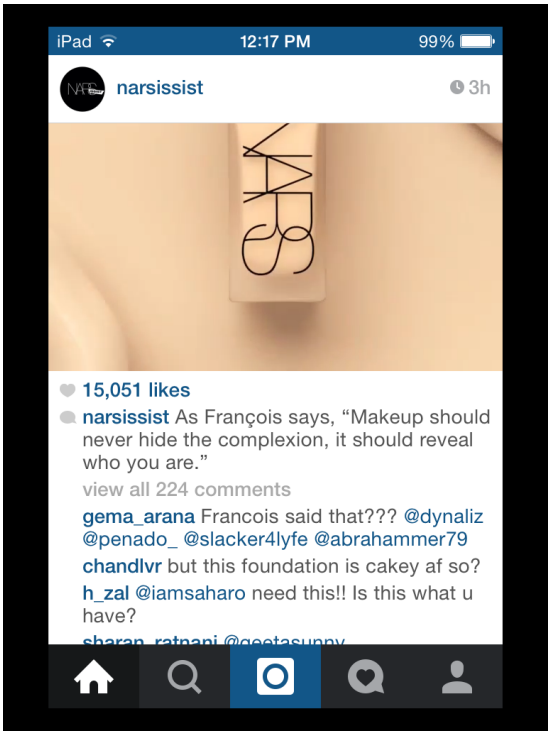

Figure 62. Narsissist's (or Nars') Instagram Post (March 2015)

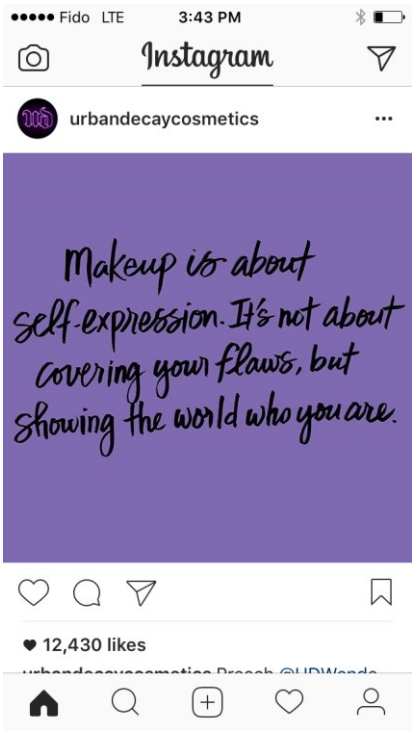

Figure 63. Urbandecaycosmetics' Instagram Post (January 2017)

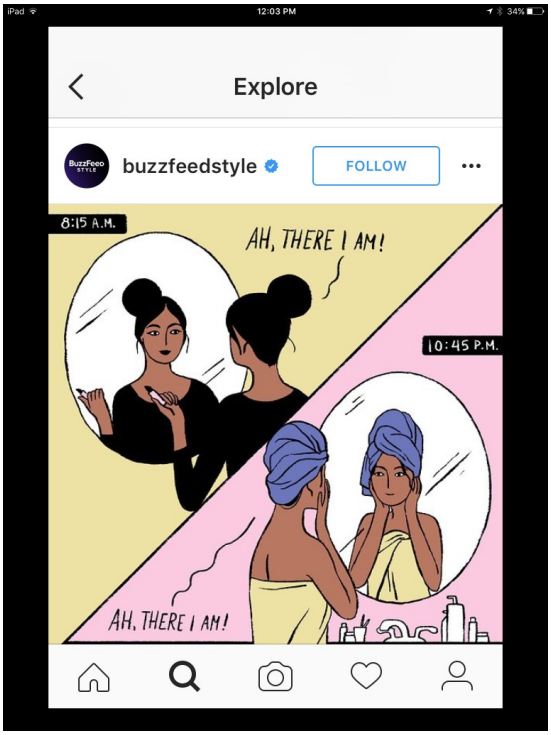

Figure 64. Buzzfeedstyle's Instagram Post (September 2016)

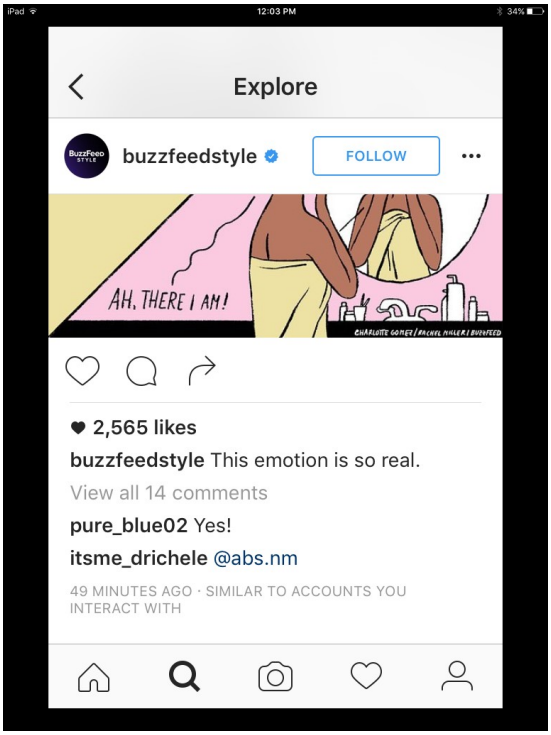

Figure 65. Buzzfeedstyle's Instagram Post (September 2016)

Figure 76. ikrxk's Instagram Post (April 2016)

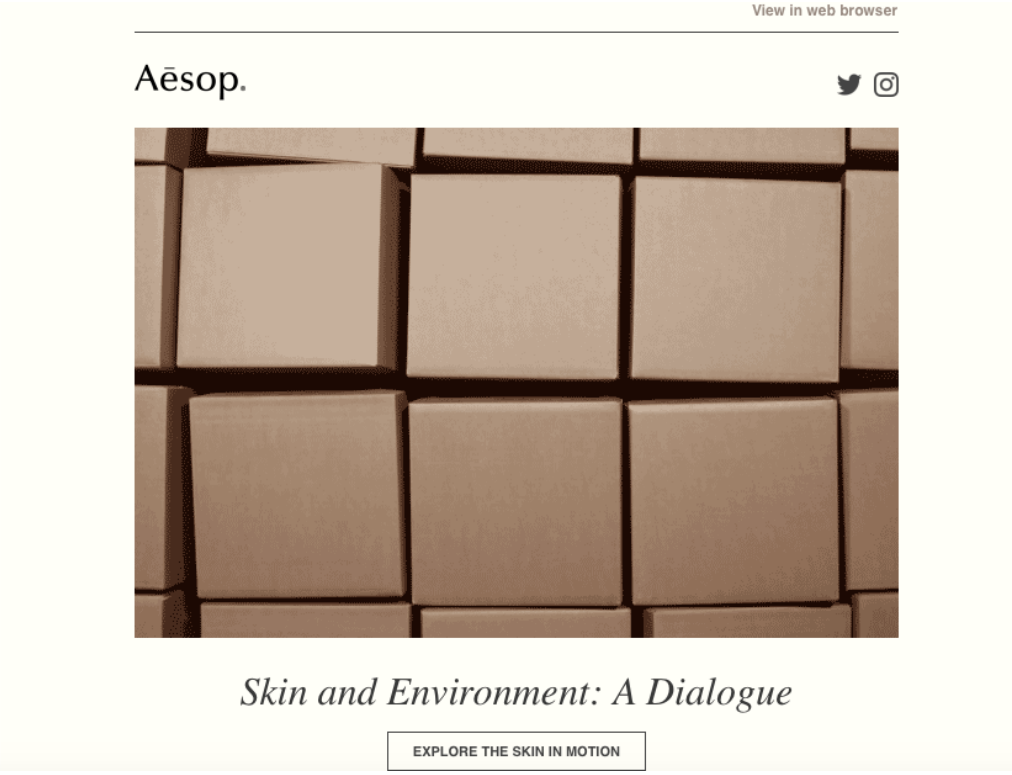

Figure 77. Screen Shot of Aesop's April 2017 Digital Newsletter (Sent by Email)

Your nighttime habits may be affecting your complexion.

"We've always assumed that lack of sleep is bad for one's skin and overall appearance," says Elma Baron, an associate professor of dermatology at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland. Now there's proof. A study conducted by Baron and commissioned by Estée Lauder involved 60 women, ages 30 to 49. Those who reported typically sleeping five hours or less had more fine lines, uneven pigmentation, and sagging skin on their faces than the other women did. As for the ones who slept soundly for seven to nine hours per night, tests showed they had better retention of skin moisture and superior damage recovery from sunburn. The researchers speculate that repair processes in skin cells occur during sleep.

Taking Credit

Many women working with men in traditionally male fields fail to take credit for their own achievements. In one study, women believed they were collaborating remotely with someone on a management task at an investment firm. In fact, they worked alone, and they all got positive feedback. When asked to rate their own contribution, women who thought they'd worked solo or with a female partner had no trouble taking credit. But about 60 percent of those who supposedly teamed with a man cited the nonexistent coworker's input as more important than her own, according to Michelle C. Haynes, an associate professor of psychology at the University of Massachusetts in Lowell, and Madeline E. Heilman, a professor of psychology at New York University. Women who resist this downplaying are likely to have more opportunities for advancement, the study authors say.

Eating Amnesia

Reading or watching television while eating compels people to increase their consumption, studies have shown. One likely reason: Preoccupation dulls taste perception. Study participants created their own drink made with their preferred proportions of grenadine syrup and water. At the same time, they tried to memorize either a string of seven digits or just a single number. The people who attempted to memorize the large number used much more of the sweet syrup compared with the others. Yet both groups rated their drinks as similarly sweet and pleasant. Other experiments that tested awareness of salty and sour flavors had similar results. When flavor doesn't register, fullness probably doesn't, either, says study coauthor Reine C. Van der Wal, a researcher at Radboud University in the Netherlands.

Figure 78. Article from Allure Magazine (March 2014)

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